FIVE MINUTES *WITH THE* BOYS' AND GIRLS' CONGREGATION

-:- Wm. H. WALKER -:-

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Five Minutes With the Boys' and Girls' Congregation

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By
Wm. H. WALKER, Ph. D., D.D.

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Preface

OVER thirty years ago, on first having a regular preaching charge, I adopted the practise of addressing the boys and girls of my congregation for five or ten minutes before the hymn preceding the usual sermon. I cannot now be sure whence came the idea, but it is probable that it was from the knowledge of the practise of many of the English non-conformist ministers. The practise was very rare in this country at that time. In five fields of which I have since been settled pastor, and in more than a dozen of which for varying periods I have been acting pastor, the custom has been continued.

There are various compensations in preaching to boys and girls. "What a futile thing is preaching!" exclaimed one disheartened preacher. So far as the average adult is concerned, that is very nearly the truth. But the minds of the boys and girls are plastic and receptive. It is very gratifying to find some arrow of truth after many years still lodged in the minds of one's youthful congregation.

But the commanding reason for the boys' and girls' sermon is the standing advertisement which it gives to the fact that boys and girls are expected

to be in attendance on the public worship of the church as much as the adults. The dissemination of the idea that the Sunday school is "the children's church" is the most subtle device of the Evil One to secure a non-church-going generation. We are creatures of habit, and earliest habits are most persistent. Train up a child to stay away from church, and even when he is old he will continue to stay away. From the observation of many years I am convinced that four-fifths of the decline in church attendance is due to that one cause.

The publication of the present volume has as its purpose the encouragement of more of my brethren of the ministry to adopt the practise of preaching regularly to the boys and girls, and to suggest the wealth of material at their hand, not only in the Scriptures, but also in myth and folk-lore, in literature, in science, in philology, and in the experiences of every-day life.

W. H. W.

Northland College, Ashland, Wis.

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1

THE LAST GOSPEL

HAVE you ever stopped to think, boys and girls, what would have happened if no one had taken the trouble to write down the story of the life of Jesus while it was yet fresh in the minds of men? Great men have lived in this world, the story of whose lives was not written down till long after they had been dead, and men had forgotten the facts, and they had to imagine what really did take place; and so we are in a great deal of doubt as to what the real facts were. Others have lived whose lives were never written, but whose names we know, and whose deeds we can pick up from stories told about them long after. Others have lived of whose names and deeds we know nothing, only that someone must have lived who did some useful thing. I would like to know, for instance, who was the first man who made a fire, or tamed a dog, or wove a piece of cloth, or milked a cow, or rode a horse, or built a boat, or cooked a meal, or built a hut. The first man who did any one of those things was as great a man as the one who built the first locomotive, or steamship, or telegraph, or airplane; but we know nothing about him, as to when or where he lived,

or what was his name, or how his great invention or discovery came about.

But it wasn't so with Jesus. A lot of men, how many we don't know, took it in hand to write about Jesus' words, and deeds, and life. Some of them were those who had known Jesus when He was on earth. Such a man was Mark, in whose mother's house the first church in the world, the one in Jerusalem, used to meet. I suspect it was in that house that Jesus celebrated the last passover with His disciples, in which He instituted the last supper, from which He went out to the garden of Gethsemane; and I suspect that Mark himself was the young man who followed Jesus and His disciples with just a bed sheet wrapped around him, and who was nearly caught by the soldiers who arrested Jesus.

Another was Matthew, the publican, one of the Twelve. He wrote the words of Jesus as well as he could remember them. We haven't the book he wrote just as he wrote it, though most or all of it was taken up into our first gospel, which bears Matthew's name, though it is not his; and into our third gospel, which was written by a doctor who used to travel with Paul, and whose name was Luke. Luke was the best writer in the New Testament. He tells us himself that a lot of people had written about Jesus before he wrote. Of all those gospels which Luke knew, only one is in existence to-day, and that is Mark's Gospel.

Luke never saw our first gospel, though it had probably been written before he wrote; but he had seen the collection of the sayings of Jesus which Matthew had made.

The years went by, and one by one every man who had actually seen and heard Jesus died. One by one these stories of the life of Jesus disappeared, until there were only three left, our first three gospels. They were probably by far the best, and we need not grieve that we haven't the poorer ones. But over in Ephesus, a city on the very western tip of Asia, looking out over the Ægean Sea toward Greece and Europe, there lived a man who had seen Jesus. He lived to be an old, old man. He had preached in Ephesus for many years. He finally grew so feeble that he could no longer go to the gatherings of Christians, but they used to carry him there, and when they called on him to speak, his message was always, "Little children, love one another." He was a Jew, but he knew Greek and had read some of the great Greek books, and loved them, and taken their thoughts into his own soul. He had thought about Jesus' own words till they had grown in his own mind into new and rich meanings. He had thought about Jesus' deeds until they too had taken on new meanings, and he had almost forgotten the mere facts in the meanings they had taken on for him. He wrote some letters, and three of them have come down to us. How much else he wrote we

cannot be sure. His name was John, and they called him the Elder, or, in Greek, the Presbyter. A great many people think he was the Apostle John, but I think myself that it is more likely that he was another John, and that the Apostle John had died a martyr's death, like all of the rest of the Twelve, many years before. At last this John in Ephesus died, probably the last who had ever seen Jesus or heard His voice.

Then those who had heard him in Ephesus and who loved him, gathered up all that he had written about Jesus, and all he had thought about Him, and all the meanings he had found in Jesus' words and deeds, and wrote them down in a story of the life of Jesus. It is our Fourth Gospel, which is called by his name, the Gospel of John. And it shows, as no other book in the world does, what Jesus could do for a man of great mind and great heart who had heard Him, and seen Him, and known Him.

2

JESUS AS A BOY

WHAT sort of a boy was Jesus? We would all like to know, wouldn't we? What games did He play? What did He do? Did He go to school, and what was school like in

those days? Did He have any work to do? Did the other boys like Him? Was He a good boy, good to His playmates, good to His brothers and sisters, good to His father and mother?

Some of those questions we can answer, and some we can guess pretty nearly. We have no stories of Jesus' boyhood days from the time He was a babe till He was twelve years old. All we are told is this:

"And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2: 40).

That tells us a good deal. He was just a natural, sturdy boy, like other boys, only a little stronger, and a little more sure to do just the right thing.

Men have invented a lot of stories about Him. One old book says that when His parents were on their way down into Egypt with Him and were about to enter a cave, dragons came out and bowed before Jesus. Lions and panthers worshipped Him and marched by His side as a kind of body-guard. A palm tree bowed down at His word that His mother might eat of its fruit, and remained bowing until He ordered it to rise. In a single day they covered as much as in a thirty days' journey. A spring came out of the ground at Jesus' word. When they entered a temple for shelter, the idols fell down on their faces before Mary, His mother, and were broken. On His re-

turn as a boy of four, a bad boy interfered with His play, and at Jesus' word he died. When His mother rebuked Him, He kicked the boy and ordered him to rise, and the boy went away well again. He made sparrows out of clay on the Sabbath, and then clapped His hands and bade them fly, and they flew away living birds. When He first went to school He knew more than His teachers.

Now whatever Jesus was and did, we can be perfectly sure He was not what these stories make Him to be, and whatever He did He did not do those things. Jesus was just a boy like other boys. Only when He was in school He studied hard and did His best and never cheated. When He played, He played with heart and soul, and always played fair, and always played so as to help the other fellows have a good time. He didn't try always to have His own way, and when He did and didn't get it, He didn't sulk, but went along with the crowd if it was right to go. When His father or mother wanted Him to help them, He was always ready with a smile and a willing hand. Whenever He saw a chance to help, He took delight in doing it.

How do I know all that? First, because it is said He grew in God's favour, and I know that is the kind of boy God likes. Then it is said men liked Him, and that is the kind of a boy men like. Then I know what kind of a man He came to be,

and there was no other kind of a boy that could have made that kind of a man.

There are two other things we can know about the boy Jesus. We can be perfectly sure He never was afraid of God, that He always looked up to the sky and the hills and thought of them all as God's world. He talked with God as boys talk with their fathers.

Then I know that Jesus must have begun very early to think of what He was to be and to do in the world. He wanted to make the world better, and help men to be right. He never was thinking of what He could get, but always of what He could give. So as the years went by, He grew more and more ready for the work God had for Him.

It would be fine if every bunch of boys and girls could have a Jesus in it. They would all have so much more fun, and would all grow up to be so much better men and women. But there was only one Jesus. The next best thing is for every boy and girl who knows about Him and loves Him, to be just as near like Him as he can.

3

JESUS AT THE TURNING POINT

I WAS riding in an automobile once down in Alabama. A coloured boy was driving, and I had nothing to do but sit quietly in the back seat and see the country. It was all new to me, and wonderfully interesting. We came to a fork in the road. It looked as if our road went straight on down a short hill, but there was also a main road that turned off to the right. We were bound for Gadsden, and the sun was going down. We did not want to waste any time. But our chauffeur thought we should keep right on, and on we kept down the hill. We had gone a mile or more when we found our road growing narrower and less travelled, there were no telephone poles beside it, and we were evidently heading off into the country. There was nothing to do but to turn around as best we could, and head back for the fork, and take the other turn. We did it, and found our way to Gadsden all right.

Everyone of us comes to a fork in the road, where it makes a lot of difference which turn we take. Every boy and girl comes to one along about thirteen or fourteen. That is the time above all others when boys and girls head right or head wrong. It is the time when they see splendid

visions, and go out to make them true, or it is the time when they see life all wrong and start out to make a miserable failure of it all.

Jesus, too, came to His fork in the road, only in those hot eastern lands boys and girls come to it a little sooner than they do with us, and Jesus seems to have grown up faster even than most Jewish boys grew up. At thirteen every Jewish father took his boy up to Jerusalem to the great annual feast, the Passover, that he might become a "son of the law," a full Jew. But Joseph took Jesus when He was only twelve. Mary, His mother, went too, and for the first time in His life Jesus saw the city which the Jews loved as no other city in the world was ever loved.

To Jesus it was a wonderful city. There was the beautiful temple, the only beautiful building the Jews ever had, and just then newly built and more splendid than ever. There were the hills all around, and the valleys separating the city from them. It was the city of David, and Solomon, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, the city where most of the wonderful things in Jewish history had happened. There in the temple were the priests offering sacrifices morning and evening, and chanting solemn Psalms in praise of God. There were learned rabbis who could tell all about the Jewish Scriptures, our Old Testament, and all that God wanted men to do. Jesus was free to wander everywhere, and see it all, and listen as He would.

But after two days the Jews might return if they would. The feast went on for six days more, but poor people couldn't stay so long, and Joseph was a poor man. So he and Mary joined a caravan moving northward, and the songs of the departing hosts died away over the hills all around. Jesus wasn't with them when they started, but boys have a way of getting together, and they supposed Jesus was with the other boys as usual. They journeyed on a whole day. Night came on, and no Jesus. They went all around the camps of their fellow travellers, but no one had seen Jesus. It was perfectly clear He had stayed behind in Jerusalem. There was nothing to do but to turn back the next morning and return to Jerusalem. It took another day to go back.

Now the search began, up and down Jerusalem, wherever boys could be found, out perhaps over all the hills roundabout where the travellers had camped, but no Jesus. The next day, almost in despair, they went up to the beautiful temple.

Now something had happened on that day when Joseph and Mary had started home. Those learned rabbis had come out of the rooms where they usually studied and taught, and sat out in the great court where all the people could gather around them, and any might ask them questions about that wonderful Old Testament, and they would answer, and perhaps ask him questions too. Not one day alone, but two, three days they sat

there. There they were sitting when Joseph and Mary came up to the temple, and there was the boy Jesus, listening, asking them questions, and answering the questions they asked Him. And everybody who heard was astonished at His questions and answers, for He seemed to understand as well or better than the old rabbis themselves.

Mary was inclined to be harsh with Jesus. She asked Him why He had treated them in that way, and told Him that for three days they had been anxiously seeking Him. Jesus was astonished now. "Why should you have spent any time looking for Me? Didn't you know that the place to find Me was in My Father's house?" The one place where He wanted to be was where God was worshipped and His will made clear. Jesus had come to the fork in the road and He had made the right turn. God, His Father, meant everything to that boy of twelve.

I presume Jesus would like to have stayed in Jerusalem, and many an old rabbi would have been glad to have taken Him and taught Him, and brought Him up to be a rabbi, too. It seemed to Jesus as if Jerusalem were the best place to be in all the world. But He wasn't living to please Himself. Joseph and Mary were His parents, and He must love and obey them. So He laid aside His dream and quietly went away with them again over the hills to far-off Nazareth, and for eighteen years we hear no more of Him than that He kept

on growing in body and mind, and in the liking of God and of men.

4

JESUS AS A YOUNG MAN

JESUS was a babe like other babes, a boy like other boys, in school, on the playground, and in the home. By-and-by He grew to be a young man. We have stories of Him as a babe, and just one story about Him as a boy, when He was twelve years old; and then we hear nothing about Him for eighteen years, except that He kept on growing in mind and in body, and people liked Him more and more, and God liked Him more and more.

What does it mean to grow from boyhood to young manhood? It means growing from life mainly play to life mainly work. It means going from the schoolroom to the workshop or farm or place where the main work of life is done.

We know that Jesus remained in Nazareth. That was His home, that was where His father and mother lived, that was the place to which He returned when as a boy of twelve He came back from Jerusalem, and that was the place from which He came when He was thirty years old to

become a teacher and preacher. Can we imagine what Nazareth was like?

Nazareth is standing still, a poor village on a hillside fronting southwest. Down in the valley below it there is a well, and from the top of the hill above it one may look away to the great caravan road crossing the land of Palestine from Damascus down to Egypt. One may see, too, the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus spent so many hours, and even a glimpse of the great Mediterranean Sea far off to the west.

We know that Jesus' father, Joseph, was a carpenter, and that Jesus became a carpenter, too. We might be sure Jesus became a carpenter even if Mark had not told us He was, for every Jewish boy must learn a trade, and generally they learned their fathers' trades. Now carpenters had different tasks in those days from carpenters in these days. Then there were no wooden houses, just brick and stone, and there was no wood about their houses except the roof, and that was very simple, just a few branches laid across, twigs on top, then earth pounded down hard. What do you suppose carpenters had to do?

One of the very few stories we have about Jesus that is not in our Bible is from Justin Martyr, and he says that Jesus as a young carpenter made plows and yokes. Now yokes are still made of wood—if anyone has seen an ox yoke you know that—and there is a good deal of wood about plows.

There was more in Jesus' day and Jesus' land. Indeed, a plow was nearly all wood, with just an iron point, and sometimes not even that. There were no foundries or factories where they were made. Carpenters made them, and Jesus as a carpenter made them. I am sure they were the very best plows and yokes the farmers around and in Nazareth had ever had.

We know that Jesus had brothers and sisters. We know the names of two of His brothers, Jacob, which by some strange process we have changed into James, and Judah, whom we know as Jude. Long after, they became bishops of the church in Jerusalem, and so had become disciples of their elder brother. He must have been a good brother to them or they never would have become His disciples.

Sometime during these eighteen years we are pretty certain that Joseph died. The last we hear of him is when he comes back from that trip to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve. While Jesus was preaching, the family that was left at home was Mary, His mother, His brothers and His sisters. Now when Joseph died Jesus, as the oldest brother, had the task of caring for and supporting the family. He had to toil, and He had to toil hard.

A great English artist, Holman Hunt, painted a picture of Jesus as a carpenter in His shop. It is the close of day, and the sun is shining level

through the windows. Jesus lifts His arms in weariness from His task, and the shadow falls on a rack on the wall, making it look as if the shadow were of a man on a cross. Mary, His mother, is there, and she sees it, and lifts her hands in startled fear as if she saw the shadow of the cross falling upon her son. Well, the shadow of the cross was there, whether anyone saw it or not. Jesus as a young man was the same strong, patient, living burden bearer that He was when He hung on the cross. That was the reason that men and God liked Him more and more.

So Jesus as a young man was just what every young man ought to be, the kind of a young man every boy ought to want to become.

5

JESUS AS A MAN

WHAT Jesus' life was as a boy and as a young man we must imagine from what we know of the life of those times and from what Jesus afterward became. What His life was as a man it is hard to describe because we know so much about it and because it was so interesting. For, though there are only four brief books which

tell the story of His life, not one of them much longer than a chapter in an ordinary book, they tell so much in their few words that there is no one who has ever lived in this world of whose true life we know so much as we do of the life of Jesus.

Jesus was a preacher. He never studied to be a preacher. No conference or bishop or presbytery or council ever gave Him authority to preach, as is true of most preachers. He had no church to preach in, and no pulpit to preach from. No bell ever rang to call the people together to form His congregation. Yet He was a preacher. He preached on the hillsides, on the mountain, beside the lake, in wild grassy spots, in the streets, in houses, and once in a while in a synagogue—which was a kind of church—or in the temple. He seldom took a text from the Bible of His day, which is our Old Testament, but He found texts in children at play, in merchants and farmers and shepherds at their tasks, in householders and housewives, in all that men were doing, in all the questions they asked, in all their troubles and needs, in birds, in flowers, in fields new-sown or of growing grain. The sermon began whenever there were those ready to hear, and it lasted till He had given them all of the message of God that they could take in.

Jesus was a teacher. He never had a license to teach. He had no schoolroom, no book from which to teach, few regular pupils, no hours of

school. Yet He was always teaching people about the deepest things by sitting down and talking with them, answering their questions, asking them questions, explaining to them all that they really needed to know in order to live right. He must have been a wonderful teacher, for people remembered what He said years afterward, and what He said altered their whole lives and made them new men and women.

Jesus was a poet and an artist, though He never made a rhyme or painted a picture or carved a statue. One does not need to write rhymes to be a poet, or to paint pictures to be an artist. The best poet is the man who can with his words make music in our souls, and the best artist is the man who can make us see pictures such as never can be painted. Jesus did that. His parables are poems without rhyme, and all that He says about what He saw is more vivid than any picture.

But more than all, Jesus was a great, big-hearted friend to everybody who was not so selfish and mean that he would not be friends with Jesus. It made no difference how poor anyone was, how mean and sinful he had been, how few friends he had; Jesus was always ready to take him as a friend if he would let Him. He did not take them as friends to scold them, and neither did He forget their sins. He simply talked with them, lived before them, loved them, prayed for them, and they grew to hate their sins because Jesus, they knew,

hated those sins, and they grew to love goodness because they loved Him.

6

JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

WE have come to the time of year, boys and girls, when all the Christian world is thinking about Jesus. I wonder what sort of a man He was? I mean, what sort of a man was He with boys and girls?

We all know that He was a very good man, the best that ever lived. But there is a kind of good people which is very hard to live with, at least for boys and girls. At least there were such when I was a boy, and I guess there are yet.

For one thing, they were never interested in the things I was interested in. I was interested in play, in railroads and steamboats, in forts and sawmills, in orchards and woods, in swimming-holes and places to play by the water. These very good people were not interested in those things at all, but in heaven and prayer meetings and pious talk and graveyards and dead folks. So we couldn't get on very well talking together. I always felt that they looked on me as foolish to be so busy about my

play. They did not say anything about it, but I felt that they only just tolerated my play, and seemed to think I would get over it by-and-by, and be interested in the same things they were, and I made up my mind I never would be.

Then about these good folks there was a sort of an atmosphere of "don't." There were really so many things that a boy wanted to do that he oughtn't to do. They did not always mention them, but it seemed to me they were thinking about them. I did not like their being so very good. I wasn't good at all, and I was vexed by the fact that they were so much better than I was.

Now, was Jesus that kind of a good man? If He was, He wasn't the kind for boys and girls. But Jesus' goodness was not that kind. He loved people, and that meant that He was interested in the things they were interested in. He loved boys and girls, and He was interested in their play. Do you know that the only hint we have in the Bible as to the games the boys and girls played in those days is in the words of Jesus? Of course, boys and girls played then as they do now, but people did not pay much attention to boys and girls and to what they were doing. Only once in the Old Testament do we hear about children playing, and then it is that in coming years the streets of Jerusalem should be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. But one day Jesus said to the Jews, "You are like children playing in the market

place, and saying, 'We have piped unto you and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented.'" It was some game the children were playing. Why, Jesus was probably just the best playfellow the boys and girls of those days ever had. He has taught old folks at last to be interested in the play of boys and girls.

He never said "Don't" to boys and girls. He did not say "Don't" to anybody very much. But one day He took a child and set him in the midst of His disciples and said, "If you don't turn about and become like little children, you can't get into My Kingdom at all."

Jesus was not interested in graveyards and dead folks. He was interested in just the same things boys and girls are, in farmers and shepherds and merchants, in shops and the heavily loaded camels, in flowers and birds and animals. He was Himself a carpenter when He was a young man, and is said to have made yokes and plows.

But the way to make sure whether a man is a boys' and girls' man is to see how the boys and girls take to him. They know. They wouldn't stay away from Jesus. He always had one close by to do anything He wanted. Mothers brought their babes to Him and He blessed them, and would not let His disciples turn them away. One of the last pictures we have of Him is of the children crowding around Him in the courts of the temple and shouting in His praise. Again He

let them, and would not let the angry priests and Pharisees stop them. That shows how they loved Him.

Why, He was just the greatest boys' and girls' man this world has ever seen. He is still, and He wants all the boys and girls to be His friends. Won't you?

7

PALM SUNDAY

ARE there any of you boys who don't like processions?—real, lively processions, I mean, with crowds of people, and banners, and lots of shouting and brass bands? He would be a strange kind of a boy who did not like something of that kind. And the girls like to look on, though I am not sure that they care to be in them.

Jesus liked processions too. He did when He was a boy, for He was a real boy, and He did when He was a man. He was in a procession once. It was when He was coming up to Jerusalem for the last time. He had spent the Jewish Sabbath over at Bethany, less than two miles from Jerusalem, with His dear friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. On Sunday morning He came to Jerusalem, over the shoulder of the Mount of

Olives, down into the valley of the Kedron and up its western slope, through the eastern gate into the city.

Jerusalem just at that time was filled with people who had come from all over Palestine and all over the world to celebrate the Feast of the Passover at Jerusalem. They filled every guest chamber and the courtyards of all the houses in the city, and overflowed, and camped on the hillsides round-about the city. Many of them had come from Galilee, where Jesus had been preaching and healing and they had learned to honour and love Him. When they saw Him coming up to Jerusalem, and saw Him for the first time in His life riding upon a donkey, they were so overjoyed that they formed a great procession, and came with Him into the city. There was no brass band—they had none in those days—and there were no banners; but they had something much prettier, for from the palm trees that grew here and there beside the road they broke the great palm leaves, and waved them in the air, or threw them in the road to make a carpet for Jesus to ride upon. There was plenty of shouting, for the throng cried, "Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

The children are not mentioned until the procession got into the city, for I suppose few of the people from Galilee had their children with them; but when it got into the city, the Jerusalem boys and girls were ready to join in, and they made the

narrow streets of Jerusalem ring with their shouts. The procession went on into the courts of the temple, but even there the children kept on shouting, till the priests and scribes grew angry and wanted Jesus to silence them, and He would not.

We should all have liked to be there, shouldn't we? Well, this is Palm Sunday, the anniversary of that day. If you could stand as I have in the great cities, and see the throngs coming from the Catholic churches, and I suppose the Greek churches, you would see everyone wearing a bit of palm leaf on coat or dress, for in the churches palm leaves are blessed and then broken and distributed to the people.

And that is well, but let us remember that the real thing is to honour Jesus, and that we cannot do just on the outside. A man might have borne palm leaves in the procession to Jerusalem that day and have had no honour for Jesus in his heart; and multitudes to-day are wearing palm leaves and doing the things which grieve the Master.

I have read about some astronomical instruments that have stood for a couple of centuries on the wall of Peking in China. They are wonderful and beautiful instruments in their workmanship, and every visitor to Peking goes to see them. But for two hundred years nobody has ever used them. To really honour anything is to use it for its true purpose.

Whenever you and I turn aside evil thoughts for

Jesus' sake, whenever we do a kindly, helpful deed for His sake, we are honouring Him, and making a procession for Him in our own hearts: for that is what Jesus wants us to do, and what He came to earth to help us to do.

8

"HE DIED FOR ME"

EVERY day except Sundays for twelve years there came to our door a gray-coated man whom we were all glad to see, for he never came without leaving us something. The children vied with each other in the race to meet him, and we older folks were not far behind. Not only did he have something for us in his hand, but he also always had a pleasant greeting in his voice. He was our mail carrier. He was a light-hearted fellow, and I do not think anyone thought that he took life too seriously.

A cavalry troop was formed in our town, which was afterward turned into a battery of field artillery. Our mail carrier became first lieutenant, and when the captain left town, he became captain. It all looked like play soldiering then, but I think the captain took it rather seriously. He took a new stand. He had something to live for. The

members of the company were his boys, and he must look out for them. He became a Christian and united with the church.

The Great War came on, and the captain and his battery went to France, and did their service nobly at the front. The captain became a major. Then one day near the end of the war came a letter saying that our old mail carrier was dead. He had been wounded slightly in the hand, and had gone to the dressing-station, when the Germans did what they did so often, deliberately bombed it. The major was severely wounded, had to be carried five miles to the rear, and died on the way of cold and exposure.

Our light-hearted, kindly mail carrier had become one of the heroes of the Great War. I think there were tears in all our eyes as we read the story.

It came very strongly to me. I had wanted to go to the war, but I was no good as a soldier; I was too old. I knew what it meant if Germany won the war, for I had lived in Germany and had felt German rule. He knew nothing about that. I could not go, but he had gone in my place, and he died for me. The freedom of this blessed land of liberty had been bought again for all of us by his death and the death of all the others who had died in the Great War.

And then my mind went back to the day when I stood on Lexington Green, where the Revolution-

ary War started. I walked across the green where the minutemen stood that day. Then I went back to the house of one of them just back of the green. He was one of those who was wounded by British balls, but he dragged himself to his own doorstep, and died there at his wife's feet. It came to me then for the first time what it meant that this man had died for me.

It has all helped me to understand a little better that another had died for me, the Jesus who died on the cross. He died for me that I might know myself forgiven, loved of God, free to live the true and holy life—and bound to live it, or grieve Him who had died for me.

9

THE JOY OF EASTER

IS there anyone who isn't happy on Easter Sunday? Why should we be happy on that day more than on other days?

Sometimes Easter is a beautiful day, and that makes us all happy. Generally the church is filled with flowers, and that makes us happy too. We sing beautiful and joyous songs, and that helps to make us happy. But the question is why every beautiful day, and all flowers, and all joyous songs

should not make us just as glad as they do on Easter Day. We have these beautiful things on Easter because the day is itself a glad day.

It is the anniversary of the day on which Jesus rose from the grave where He had been lying dead since Friday evening. We are glad that after all His sorrow and suffering He was able to triumph and rise to a new and glorious life.

We are glad because His resurrection assures ours. If He rose we shall rise. As the Bible says, He "brought life and immortality to light." I presume you haven't thought much of what it might mean to die and cease to be forever. Shut your eyes and keep them shut, and imagine what it would be to have them forever shut, no light ever to come to them again. Shut your ears, and imagine that never again would you hear a sound. Imagine that you are paralyzed and can never feel the world about you, that you cannot move a muscle, that your very mind ceases to think, and everything becomes a blank to you forever. That it is to cease to be. That is what many men expected to become till Jesus came back from the tomb, and made them know that though we die, we may live again. Men have always dreaded death, and they always will, but it isn't the same when we know that there is life beyond.

We are glad because Jesus made us know by His resurrection that that life beyond is a happy, joyous life. We do not know much about it. We

never can. But we are assured that it is all well with us if we live as Jesus lived. Have you ever looked across the water to shores on the other side? How beautiful they looked! Isaac Watts, the hymn writer, used to live on the shore of Southampton Water, in Southern England. He looked away across to the shore on the other side, and it looked so beautiful—Southern England always looks beautiful, I have seen it as it came up out of the waves of the Atlantic—and Watts took his pen and wrote of heaven:

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green.
So to the Jews old Canaan stood
While Jordan rolled between.
Could we but stand where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor Death's cold flood
Could fright us from the shore."

There is one thing very definitely which Jesus' resurrection tells us about the life beyond. Jesus' own life here on earth had a great deal of sorrow in it. Men rejected Him, hated Him. His best friends deserted Him and denied Him. At the last He was unjustly put to death by as cruel a way as men ever invented. All His life long Jesus was tempted. He never gave way to the temptation, but He had to meet it just as you and I do.

He had all these sorrows and temptations because sin was here in the world.

When He rose to that new life, He was done with sin forever. There were no more temptations, no evil men to hate Him, no soldiers to crucify Him. He had risen out of a life in which there was sin to a life which was pure, and holy, and loving, and hence joyful through and through.

We have sorrows, too, don't we? We have our bad days and our bad hours in every day. When we think about it, it is because we are sinners and in a world of sin. If everybody were good and never did any wrong, and if we ourselves were always good, there wouldn't be any sorrow in the world, or at least so little that it wouldn't amount to much.

If we enter the same life beyond that Jesus entered, then we are done with sin, and so we are done with the sorrows that sin causes. That is the gladdest kind of glad news, and it ought to make Easter morning to us the gladdest day of all the year.

10

WHAT IS IT TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

WHAT is it, boys and girls, to be a Christian? This church, and every church, is for the sake of making people Christians, or helping them to be better Christians. What is a Christian?

I suppose if I were to go to all the people in this church this morning and ask them if they were Christians, some of them would say, "Why, I am trying to do the right thing." I suppose that that means that they think that to be a Christian is to try to do the right thing. That is true. A Christian is a person who wants to do right. He wants to do right above everything else in this world. As Jesus puts it, he "hungers and thirsts after righteousness." If he must go hungry to be right, he will go hungry. If he must be poor to be right, he will be poor. If he must suffer to be right, he will suffer.

But to want to do right is not all of being a Christian. To want to do anything is not all of doing it. There is the question whether we understand what we want to do aright. Suppose we want to paint a picture, let us say a picture of a horse. Do we know what a horse looks like? A man who had never seen a horse might take a cow

for a model and paint a cow for a horse. If you wanted to paint a picture of a man, you wouldn't want to take a sheep for a model, or even a boy or a girl, or a woman. What is a good man like? What is it to be good?

Now, of course, the only thing that can show us just what a good man is like is a good man. A good man is not like a good horse, or ox, or anything else we have ever seen, but just a good man. Where is there a man good enough to show us just what a good man is like?

In Athens, four hundred years before Christ, lived a man by the name of Socrates. He spent his time in teaching the people how to be good, and he was honest and courageous. I suppose he was the best man who ever lived in Greece. Still, he was sometimes coarse, and he did not seem to care much for his wife and children. We should hardly want to take him for a model.

In China lived Confucius, about two hundred years earlier. He, too, was a good man, the best, perhaps, there ever was in China, and he wrote some very good books; but knew nothing about God, nothing about love to all men, nothing about humility and self-sacrifice. Confucius won't do to tell us all a good man ought to be. So in India there was Buddha, but he thought life was all wrong, and the best thing was for us to cease to be.

There was only just one man good enough to show us just what a good man ought to be, and

that man was Jesus Christ. To be a Christian is to be trying to be good and right like Jesus.

But there is another question about doing anything, and that is whether we have the skill and power to do it; and if we do not have it in ourselves, whether we can get it in someone else, or in some tool, or machine. No man can lift a ton, but he can get a machine that will lift it for him, by the power of steam or of electricity. No man could build a steamship alone, but he can get many men to work with him and help him.

Now, men are never so weak and helpless as when they are trying to do the right just for themselves. The fact is, no one ever succeeded in doing it, and no one ever will, except Jesus. And Jesus not only shows us just what being good is, but He is living still to help us to do the good. He can furnish just the power we need. So to be a Christian is to be right, like Jesus Christ, and with His help. That is all there is of it, and it covers the whole thing.

11

GROWING TO BE LIKE CHRIST

I HAVE a text this morning, boys and girls, but first I want to preach my sermon.

Did you ever try to copy anything? Perhaps it was a picture. How did you do it? Perhaps you

did just as I have seen painters do before the great pictures in the galleries of Europe. They would stand before the picture they were copying, and measure it all off. Then they would draw on their canvas just what they had measured. Then they would look at the picture they were copying, and wherever it had red, they would paint red on their own, and wherever it was blue they would paint blue, and so on with all the colours. What do you suppose they had when they got through? Just a piece of spoiled canvas, that was all. As a picture it was good for nothing. Oh, it gave the very measure of the one they were copying, and its colours were somewhat the same, but it was no more like the picture they pretended to be copying than a wooden Indian is like a man. It was hard, and cold, no spirit, no life in it.

Men who copy that way never do anything else. They never can become great painters for themselves. But there have been painters who painted so much like their teachers, or so much like some painter whom they loved, that you could not tell their pictures apart. How did they do it?

Why, they just sat down before the picture of the man they loved, and they looked at it and looked at it, let it sink into their souls, stir all their feelings. They studied other pictures in the same way. If the living painter were there, they watched him at his work, and just became filled with him. Then they went away and painted.

But they had so taken the painter they were imitating or copying into their souls that it seemed as if he moved their fingers, and their hands, and painted through them.

It is so when we want to grow to be like a person. We cannot just say, "Now he does this thing in just this way, and that thing in that way." We must live with him, think about him, love him, and by-and-by he lives in us. He just acts through us. I have seen it in myself, as I have had a teacher I loved, and admired, and studied. I just came to act as he did.

That is the way to grow to be like Jesus. We all want to be like Him, don't we? We can't just tack on to ourselves this and that and the other virtue that Jesus had. We can't imitate Him from the outside. But we can study Him, learn all about Him, think about Him, love Him, and then we shall grow to be like Him. He will come into our hearts, and live in us, and act through us.

Now, here is my text, just part of a verse, Ephesians 3: 17—"Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."

That means just what I have been saying. Christ may live in you and act through you till you grow to be just like Him.

12

GOD FIGHTING WITH US AGAINST THE FEVER OF SIN

I HEARD a great preacher once tell this story, boys and girls: A mother heard that her son was to be brought home sick with a very dangerous and contagious fever. She might have had him taken to a hospital and hired a nurse to care for him. Instead, she had all the curtains, and furnishings, and decorations, everything that could catch and hold disease germs, taken out of one of the rooms in her own home. She changed her own garments and put on those of a nurse. She told her family that they were not to come to her or have anything to do with her, except as in perfectly safe ways they brought her what she needed. Then, when her boy came, she met him at the door, and said, "My son, your mother is going to fight the fever with you. It is not your fever alone, it is mine too; and I will never leave you till the last pock and scab is healed and you are well again." You can imagine, can't you, how that boy felt to know that he was not to be turned off with some stranger, but was to be cared for by his own mother. Then she took him to the room she had prepared, and there she tended him and nursed him day after day while the fever raged on.

One day the boy said, "Mother, don't you love

me any more? You haven't kissed me for two days. You used to kiss me every day." It might mean death for that mother just then to kiss him, but without hesitating she answered, "Yes, my boy, mother loves you just the same," and then bent down and kissed his fevered lips. He was her boy.

"Now," said the preacher, "that is just what God does with every one of us. Sin is a fever that has taken hold of our lives, and God is going to sit down by your life and mine and fight the battle with us. He says, 'It is not your sin alone, it is our sin, and we will fight it together.' And He is never going to leave us till every scab and pock of sin is taken from our lives."

Sometimes, perhaps, boys and girls, people will tell you, "If you do wrong and disobey Him, God won't love you." That isn't true. God loves us just the same. He is very much grieved over our sins, but He doesn't love us the less. He loves us too much to let us go on in our sinning, and He has to make it very hard for us in our sin, but that does not mean that He does not love us.

So we don't have to fight our sins all alone, hoping that God will give us His love by-and-by if we are successful. He loves us now, and by His Holy Spirit He is helping us in our battle with our own sins.

Oughtn't that to give us courage to fight the harder? If God is fighting with us, we cannot fail.

13

SALVATION

I WANT to talk to you, boys and girls, about a word. Curious things words are, with long histories sometimes and strange meanings not easy to get at. Sometimes we think they mean one thing when in reality they mean something very different, and we get fooled about them.

I once had visit my church and speak at one of its services some officers of the Salvation Army. You may have seen them, men and women in blue clothes with red bands around their caps or hats bearing the words Salvation Army. What do they mean by "salvation"? What do any of us mean by salvation? Jesus came to bring salvation, every minister is a preacher of salvation, and every church is established as a means to salvation.

Sometimes we can find out what words mean by finding where they came from. We do not look far to find that "salvation" comes to us from the Latin, and that the earliest form of it is a Latin word, "salus," meaning "safe." Salvation is saving people, or making them safe.

But safe from what? Are men in danger? What do they need to be saved from, drowning, or fire, or falling, or what?

I used to think as a boy that it was a salvation from hell that Jesus brought to men, and hell was

a lake of fire, and that men were in danger of suffering there forever and ever. Jesus saved men from falling into that lake, and got them into heaven, a beautiful city where men could be happy forever. Salvation was a matter of being in one place, and not being in another. It was just a matter of place.

But does our happiness, boys and girls, depend on the place we are in? If so, all the people who live in beautiful homes would be happy, and all the people who live in miserable homes would be miserable.

But haven't you seen people who lived in fine homes who were very unhappy? I have. And haven't you seen people who lived in wretchedly poor, tumble-down homes who were happy? I have. Now you all have good homes. I know it, for I have been in them. Are you always happy in them? Haven't there been times when you had almost everything that heart could wish, and yet you were miserable? What was the trouble? Why, something had gone wrong inside. You had done some wrong deed, or you had had some angry feeling, and the richest palace and the finest food, and the best clothes and the most beautiful things to look at could not make you happy—no, not even the kindest friends.

Then perhaps there have been other times when you had none of these things, when you were cold, or wet, or hungry, or tired, or sick, but you had

just done some kind, loving deed, and your heart went out in love to everybody, and you were happy in spite of it all. Why, some of the happiest people in the world had the least outside to make them happy.

Now suppose a man could go to heaven, beautiful as we think it is, and should carry with him all the bad feelings he had ever had. Could he be happy even in heaven? Suppose a man should go to hell, awful as we think of it as being, and spend his whole time there trying to help others. Don't you suppose that by-and-by he would begin to be happy even there?

The great question is not where we are, but what we are; not what is around us, but what is inside of us. Sin makes folks miserable everywhere. Goodness makes folks happy everywhere in the long run.

Now Jesus came to save people from making a miserable wreck of their lives, and suffering for it. That is, He came to save people from their sins, and heaven is people saved from their sins, and loving and helping each other all the time. Hell is people who haven't been saved from their sins, and who are all wrong in their hearts, hateful and mean. Heaven is all happiness because it is all goodness, and hell is all misery because it is all badness. If we will learn to live Jesus' kind of life, then we are saved, and we never can be saved any other way.

14

THE FOUNTAIN OF JUTURNA

IN the ancient city of Rome, boys and girls, there was a spring of water. It rose in the sands at the foot of a hill. On that hill at first the city of Rome was built, for it was the Palatine Hill. There was a path leading down the hill from the city to the fountain, and down that path the women and maidens of Rome used to come for water centuries before Christ was born. They called the spring the Fountain of Juturna, and they imagined that a nymph presided over it by that name. In course of time they erected a little shrine in her honour beside her fountain.

When Rome began to grow by taking in all the hills roundabout, on all of which people were living, then the Fountain of Juturna found itself in the center of the city, for the valley into which it flowed became the Roman Forum, the central public square around which all the city's life revolved. Naturally enough, more was made of the fountain than ever before. It was thought that its waters would heal the sick, so they built porches roundabout it where the sick might lie all day long, and drink of its healing waters. There was an altar, too, to Juturna, and a marble basin into which the waters might fall, and a fine paved street leading

up the hillside where once the path had been. And still Rome grew, and strangers from distant lands came to the city, and drank of the waters of Juturna. Indeed, Rome was the central city of all the world.

But the centuries went by, and a strange thing happened. Rome was no longer the mistress of the world. Strangers came no more to visit her. Her mighty buildings began to fall into ruins. There was a new faith, too, in the old city. Men no longer believed in nymphs and haunted fountains, and built no more shrines. Juturna was forgotten, and her shrine broken down. Still the fountain flowed. What do you suppose they did to it? Why, they made a sort of sink and sewer of it, into which they threw the filth of the city. Worse than that, they buried dead bodies up on the hill above the fountain, so the water that once was so pure and healthful became foul and deadly.

That was centuries ago. No dead bodies have been buried on the Palatine Hill for hundreds of years, nor has the Fountain of Juturna been used as a sink. You may see it there if you go to Rome, but you must not drink of it. It is still deadly from the filth that got into it centuries ago.

As I read the story of the Fountain of Juturna I thought to myself, "Isn't that just what some people are doing with their minds?" Wonderful things are these minds of ours. Think of all the beautiful things which men have thought of, beau-

tiful statues, beautiful pictures, beautiful songs, and music. Think of the wonderful things they have done with their minds, how they have been able to weigh the stars and tell their courses, to discover the tiny creatures all about us, so small that there may be a million of them in a single drop of water! Think how by the use of their minds men have been able to change the very face of the earth! Think how men can reach out after and know something of the Infinite God that made and guides all these on their way!

Yet some people are more stupid than those people who lived in Rome in the Dark Ages, for into these wonderful minds they dump foul stories, unclean thoughts, unholy desires. I suppose they think that it all means nothing, that they can all be washed out again. But they never can. They are like the filth in the Fountain of Juturna. They go on poisoning and defiling our thoughts and words through all the years. There are people's minds which are just sewers for filth to flow in.

The only way to have a fountain pure is to keep it pure. The only way to have a mind pure is to keep it pure. Think of that if you are ever tempted to let any of this nasty stuff into your minds. Remember the Fountain of Juturna, and keep it out.

15

BRAINS OVER MUSCLE

I WONDER if there are any boys here who ever tried to chop wood with a dull ax. If you did you found it was hard work, didn't you? I found that out when I was a boy. My father died when I was just about sixteen years old. One of the legacies that he left was twenty cords of the toughest hickory wood that was ever cut in the State of Michigan. Now he used to saw and split most of the wood that we burned, and in those days we burned nothing else; and I wanted to do just as father had done. So I went at it. But the ax was dull, and I pounded away to little avail. Finally a kind neighbour showed me that there was a way of bringing down that ax and giving it just a little turn as it struck the wood which would prevent the ax getting wedged, and which would lay open the chunk easier. You see, I began to split wood with my brains as well as with my arms.

Do you know there was a man in Bible times who must have had the same experience I had? He grew to be a philosopher, and he wrote a book, and his book got into our Bible. It is a rather gloomy book on the whole, but in it he tells about chopping wood. You will find it in Ecclesiastes, the tenth chapter, the tenth verse. That is easy to

remember, isn't it? Look it up when you go home. This is what he said:

"If the iron be blunt, and one do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct."

That is, if a man has a dull ax, he has to work harder; but if he is smart enough to use his brains, it makes his work easier.

Boys and girls, there is the whole secret of men getting on in this world. Men have used their brains to help them out of difficulties. So they have made life easier and more beautiful, and richer in every way.

A monkey is most like a man of any creature in God's world. But monkeys do not use their brains to help them out, and so monkeys are living just as they did ten thousand years ago. Men find themselves in some parts of the world where it is hot. Now a monkey will sit under the shade of a tree, but he will never build a hut to keep off the sun, nor make himself a hat. A man will, so a man can live where a monkey cannot. Men have found themselves in parts of the world where it was too cold for them. Now a monkey will sit by the fire and warm himself, but he will never put a stick of wood on the fire to keep it burning, much less will he build a fire, or put on a fur coat. Man will, so man can go where the monkey would perish. A monkey will throw a stone at an enemy, but he will never sharpen the stone, or put it on the end of a

shaft and shoot it from a bow so that it will go farther, strike harder, and cut deeper. A man will, so he has been able to destroy his enemies and live in safety. A monkey will crush with a stone a nut which he cannot crack with his teeth, but he will never smooth off the stone and fit it to another and make it grind his food for him. Still less will he hitch it to a waterwheel or a steam engine and make them grind for him. Man will, so man can have better food than the monkey.

The whole difference between the way men live and the way monkeys live is that men use wisdom to direct. It is the triumph of brains over muscle. Life grows easier, and more beautiful, and more desirable all the time because men are using their brains more.

Why do you boys and girls go to school and study day after day? It is that you may learn to use your brains, to think, that you may get wisdom to direct. You cannot even use the wonderful things which men have thought out in the past unless you have wisdom, unless you can think. And there is no reason why life should not grow easier and richer all the time. When I was a boy there wasn't a telephone or a phonograph, or an electric light or an automobile, or an airplane in the world. Hundreds of inventions have been made, and a whole vast world of truth found out that help us to live. And there is more to be invented and more found out than has been yet. Study! Work!

Learn! Do not waste a day! Get all the wisdom you can, and then use it to make this world better!

16

TO BE, NOT TO SEEM

THERE was once a young man, boys and girls, just in his teens, barely more than a boy, who became emperor of the great Roman Empire. He was a handsome fellow, gracious and kindly in his manners. He had been trained for his high station by the wisest philosopher, and the bravest and truest soldier in Rome. They had been his private tutors or teachers. His accession to the throne was hailed with delight, for Rome was weary. Its last emperor had been a clumsy old fool, and his predecessor an insane and bloodthirsty tyrant, and his predecessor a perfect monster of vice. No wonder the Romans rejoiced over this handsome young prince, and sang his praises, and expected a great and glorious reign, and were ready to do anything for him.

And all would have been well if only the young emperor had been what he seemed to be. But the fact was he was only seemingly good. Inside he was bad through and through. His beauty was

only of face and form. His gracious manners were only put on. He followed the teachings of his instructors only so long as he thought necessary to stand in with the people, then dismissed them.

It all came out little by little. The badness in his heart came out where all men could see it. He was as cruel, as murderous, as licentious, as vile and low a prince as ever lived, and when I give you his name, Nero, you may know it as that of a man as thoroughly hated and despised as any man that ever lived. At last his people rose against him, and he fled from Rome to a house of his out in the country; but he could not be safe there. There was not a place for him in all the wide world, nor a single soul that loved him; and he died at last from a dagger driven home by a slave, a dagger with which he dallied, but which he had not courage to use on himself. The sham goodness would not do. The world had found him out.

There was once a statesman in this country who stood high in the counsels of the nation. He, too, was handsome, polished, learned, and he seemed always able to control men. He was elected to office after office, until he came to be next to the highest man in the land, Vice-President of the United States. A single vote more would have made him President of the United States.

But for all his elegance, he was a bad man, an utterly selfish man. At last it all came out. He lost his friends and associates, then his office, and

at last was caught in a scheme which made him a traitor to his country. He was tried for treason and barely escaped. He ended his days as an outcast, and sometimes a beggar. Next to Benedict Arnold there are few names more despised in this land of ours than that of Aaron Burr, third Vice-President of the United States.

There is no use in trying, boys and girls, to appear what you are not. God knows what you are, you know what you are, and sooner or later men will know what you are. The wrong you do will come to light. The evil you have been cherishing but have been trying to keep out of sight, will leap out in some evil deed. You are going to pass for just what you are, no more and no less. In the end you will be less esteemed than if you had not tried to be esteemed for what you were not. For men hate to be deceived, and they turn against the deceiver. They will honour an openly bad man more than one who has not been so bad but has been a hypocrite, pretending to be better than he was.

There is only one way to have the real esteem of men, and that is to be worthy of it, to be good and true, wise and loving all through. For Jesus Himself said, "Nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest; nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light" (Luke 8: 17).

17

AN EMPTY HOUSE

DID you ever stop to think, boys and girls, how the bulbs of our incandescent electric lamps are made? I once saw them made. First, there is made the socket, the brass part at the base. Into that is fitted the carbon filament through which the current is to pass. Over that is set a sort of glass cup and fastened into the socket so that it is air tight. Then the bulb is attached to an air pump, and all the air that can be is taken out of it, and while it is still empty of air, the glass is heated and drawn up together and closed, at the end, so that no air can get in. We say that the inside of a bulb is a vacuum, *i. e.*, that there is no air in it. That is the reason that you can send a current of electricity through it, and make it red hot, and yet it does not burn. Burning is the uniting of something with the oxygen of the air. If there is no air there, nothing can burn.

Yet our bulbs do in the end burn out. That is because we can't get all the air out of the bulbs. It never can be gotten altogether out of anything. There is nothing empty anywhere in the whole great universe. You speak of emptying a glass. That is, you pour out the water or whatever else was in the glass. But if you put down your mouth

to the glass, you can breathe there. That means that air has rushed in to take the place of the water poured out. It rushes in everywhere, and fills every nook and cranny of the world that is not filled with something else.

Now, it is just as impossible to make an empty life as it is to make an empty bulb or any other space that is empty. Our minds are always thinking when we are awake, and some folks think they are too when we are asleep. Certainly they are when we dream. Our bodies are always doing something. At least our hearts are beating and our lungs breathing and our blood circulating. Generally we are moving eyes or hands or feet or lips, or all of them at once.

One of Jesus' parables was about a man who was possessed by a demon. In some way the demon was cast out of the man, and as people believed in those days, went out into the desert where demons dwelt. But he found no other man there to enter, and no other place to rest. So he went back to the man from whom he had come out, and lo! his house was swept and all put in order, but it was empty. So he took seven other demons, worse than himself, and they all went in and dwelt with that man, and his last state was worse than the first. That was what came of trying to keep empty house, to keep a vacuum in one's heart.

But there are lots of people trying to do it, to be good by keeping evil out, without filling their lives

with good. They all fail in the end. There is only one way of keeping evil out of our hearts, and that is by filling them with good. I used to see men sign the pledge and try to get over the drink habit. The men who got busy trying to save other drunkards generally succeeded. The others generally went back to their cups again.

The message is for all of us. We all have evil in us we want to get rid of. The only way to do it is to fill our lives with good. If you have a temptation to bad thoughts, keep your mind busy thinking good thoughts. If you have a bad habit, crowd it out by doing something good. Don't try to be empty. It cannot be done.

18

ANGELS IN THE DIRT

IN turning over the leaves of an old scrapbook of mine one day I came on a little story I had forgotten. A woman was trying to persuade a little girl who was playing in the dirt to go with her to Sunday-school. The little girl did not want to go.

"Don't you want to learn how to be an angel up in heaven?" asked the lady.

"No," was the answer, "I don't want to be an

angel up in heaven. I want to be an angel down here in the dirt."

Now, I think that little girl had the right of it, don't you? Not, I mean, about not wanting to go to Sunday-school, but in not wanting to learn how to be an angel up in heaven. For, in the first place, she couldn't be an angel. None of us will ever be angels. God doesn't make His children into angels when He takes them to heaven. It is all a fake notion that He ever does, and the lady did not know her Bible or she would never have asked such a question. But, more than that, I do not know how much good angels are up in heaven. They may be very useful, but I do not know anything about it, and not knowing, I cannot see why I should be anxious to learn how to be an angel up in heaven.

But I do know that angels would be very useful down here in the dirt. Indeed, wherever there is any kind of dirt, there is need of some kind of an angel.

There is need of an angel in every sand-pile and mud puddle where mud pies are made. Some boys and girls are anxious to get all the sand or mud for themselves, and keep it as long as possible. They are not angels. I will not mention just what they are. But the angels in the sand-pile and the mud puddle are those who are helping everybody else to have as good a time as possible and are forgetting themselves.

Wherever there is a dirty and disordered home there is need of an angel. This particular angel is one who knows how to pick up and bring order, to wield a brush and a broom and a dusting rag, and a scrubbing-brush. Order and cleanliness begin to make any home like heaven.

I have seen some parts of the great cities where there was a crying need of an angel or several of them. The houses were old and decayed, the streets filthy, sidewalks rotten, children ragged and dirty and quarrelsome and foul-mouthed, women slovenly, and men slouching and often half drunk. There was need of an angel to teach people how to keep clean, and to give them courage to try to be better. I have seen some angels right in that dirt who were trying to do just that sort of thing.

Think of Florence Nightingale, the army nurse in the Crimean War. The English soldiers were dying by the thousand, not only because of their wounds from Russian balls, but more from neglect, poor food, filth, and wretchedness of their hospitals and surroundings. Florence Nightingale went out as a nurse, and brought order out of confusion, and saw that the wounded men were tenderly cared for, and comforted in every way. And the soldiers kissed the very hem of her garments as she went by. They called her the angel of the Crimea, and they were right.

Now, the woman who spoke to the little girl was wrong. Sunday-school, church, the religious ser-

vices, are meant, not to teach people to be angels up in heaven, but angels down here in the dirt. That is the real reason for there being any such things. And if you will just look around a little, every one of you, I am sure you will find some dirt in which you can be angels if you want to.

19

ALWAYS AT IT

I LIKE tan, boys and girls, don't you? I like tanned boys and I like tanned men and women. I like tanned girls, little girls and big girls too. I like them a good deal better than I do these girls that have diddled with a powder puff so long that they look like cadavers from the graveyard done up in tight skirts and walking around to save funeral expenses. Tan is the colour of health. It is the colour God meant people to wear. Untanned people frequently remind me of half-baked pies. They suggest sick-beds and pills and graveyards.

I have been working all the summer to get a good coat of tan. I have been outdoors from early morning as long as it was light enough to see to work, no matter how hot it was. And I think I am pretty well tanned up, don't you? I would like to keep that coat of tan all the time.

But in less than two weeks the college where I

teach will open up, and then I shall be shut up indoors all day long, teaching and studying. After just a week or two of that sort of life my beautiful coat of tan will all be gone, and I shall look as pale and half-baked as if I had been indoors all summer. I have known a lot of men who were farmers once, and when they were farmers they were as brown as berries. But they had ceased to be farmers and had lived indoors, and the result was that they were as pale as dry-goods merchants. I once visited an island in Lake Michigan, Beaver Island, and saw a man whom they called "Old Salty." He had once been a sailor on the salt ocean, and as a sailor had been as bronzed as sailors usually are. But he had been off the ocean and hadn't sailed for many a year, and he looked all bleached out.

There is only one way to keep a coat of tan, and that is to be outdoors all the time in the sun and in the wind. Sitting indoors or in the shade will bleach anybody out.

The only way to keep anything is to be always using it. Sailors on the ocean are never seasick, no matter how stormy it is. Let them cease sailing for a few years, and most of them would grow seasick in a storm just like the rest of us. Some of you, perhaps, are taking music lessons. Every day you must practise running scales and playing pieces over and over, that your fingers may become limber and fairly dance over the keys. Perhaps

you have seen some master pianist who seemed to be able to do just what he wanted with his fingers. How could he do it? He wasn't born that way. It was simply that he had practised every day, hours at a time. A great pianist once said, "If I omit practise for a single day, I know the difference. If I omit it for two days, the critics know it. If I omit it for three days, the public knows it."

Now, the hardest thing in the world to do is to be good. There are so many temptations to drag us down, and our own natures are so stubborn and so little inclined to be good, and in general we are so lazy. There is only one way to become good, and that is to be always at it. But, do you know, some people try to be good by working at it, real hard perhaps, for a day or two, and then resting up for a week or two, and being as bad as they please. Some people try to be religious by being very, very religious on Sundays, and then going off and taking a vacation between Sundays and during the summer time altogether. By-and-by they think there is something the matter with the church, and the preacher is no good, and religion itself is doubtful, and they are not sure whether there is a God, and whether He can hear them or cares anything about them.

There is only one way to do good and to be good in this world, boys and girls, and that is to be always at it.

20

A SPOILED BELT

DID you ever hear, boys and girls, of a man buying a new belt, and then, while it was yet new and good, taking it and burying it in a hole in the ground, and leaving it there till it was all spoiled? If you saw a man doing that, you would think, wouldn't you, that it was about time to send him to the insane asylum? The Bible has the story of a man who did just that thing.

His name was Jeremiah. He was a prophet. One day the Lord told him to go and buy a new girdle. A girdle is just a belt, you know. It may be of leather, or it may be of rope, or it may be of cloth. This particular belt was of linen. Jeremiah did as the Lord told him, and then the Lord bade him take good care of it, and not let it get wet or spoiled in any way. And Jeremiah did just as the Lord told him, and put on his new girdle, and wore it.

By-and-by the Lord told him to take his girdle, his new girdle which he had been so choice of, and go and hide it in a hole of the rocks beside a big river. It was wet there, enough to spoil any girdle. But Jeremiah did just as the Lord told him to do. Then after a while the Lord told him to go and get it again. So Jeremiah went and dug it out

of the hole in the rocks where he had put it; for dust had blown into the hole, and rubbish had collected there and covered his girdle all up. And when he drew out his girdle, it was all spoiled and good for nothing. He could not wear it, or even use it for old rags, it was so rotten.

Of course, the trouble was that the girdle had been in a bad place for girdles. It was a good girdle, but a hole where worms crawl, and dampness gathers, and dirt collects, would spoil the best girdle that ever was made. Nobody but a fool would put a girdle there and expect it to remain clean and good.

Men don't do such things, but I will tell you what they do do. They put themselves in worse places than that hole, places where men carouse, and gamble, and tell bad stories, and concoct all sorts of evil. Men can no more put themselves in such places and come out clean and good than girdles can out of holes in the rock or the soil. Boys and girls do the same thing, and come out the same way. They put themselves in circles of other boys and girls whose talk is silly or bad, or whose deeds are wrong. By-and-by the boy or girl who gets into that kind of company comes out spoiled like Jeremiah's girdle. It isn't all in vain that fathers and mothers warn you against such company. If you are ever tempted yourself to get into such company, just remember Jeremiah's girdle and don't get into any such hole.

21

PLAY AND WORK

I ONCE went to hear a lecture by a philosopher. Do you know what a philosopher is? Well, he is a man who tries to get down to the bottom of things and tell just how things are and why they are as they are. I think myself that philosophers have been about the wisest men there have ever been in this world. But not every man who calls himself a philosopher is a wise man, and not everything that any philosopher says, even if he be a wise man, is wise and true.

The substance of this lecture was that we do not play enough. All work ought to be play. We ought to play all the time.

Now that sounds fine, doesn't it? That is just what you have thought sometimes when father, or mother, or teacher have called you away from play and asked you to do some work. You have thought, "What a lot of fun one could have in this world if only we did not have to work!" Suppose there were no work to do in school, but the teachers just played with the scholars all the time. Suppose there were no work to be done in the home, but father and mother and everybody just played with you all the time. Suppose at church and Sunday-school there were no sitting

still and listening to prosy old preachers and Sunday-school teachers talk, but everybody went in for a game. Wouldn't that be great?

But wait a minute. Suppose everybody else did nothing but play, too, how would that work out? Suppose when it came meal time, mother said, "It's hard work to cook. I want to play." When there were new clothes needed, father said, "It takes hard work to get money for new clothes, and I don't see any fun in working." Suppose the butcher should be playing when you want meat, and the grocer when you want groceries, and the baker when you want bread, and the coal man when you want coal, and the electric light man when you want light. How long would the world run in that fashion? A world that did nothing but play would soon be a played-out world.

Now, of course, the philosopher whom I heard lecture didn't mean that. He knew as well as the rest of us that there must be work or we should all go naked and starve. Work makes all the good things of the world.

But there are different ways of going about work. Some people work as if they were playing. I remember the way the boys used to play during recess when I went to school. In ball season, for instance, they used to come rushing down the stairs and bursting out of the building, shouting, "Scrub One!" "Scrub Two!" or scrub something else, and almost in less time than it takes to tell it, there

was a ball game going in the school yard. Now suppose there had been wood to chop, or cows to drive home, or a garden to be weeded, or anything else of that kind. Do you think they would have gone about it that way? Don't you believe it would have made the work easier if they had? That was what the philosopher meant. You can make any task easier and more joyous if you only put all your heart and soul into it.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccl. 9: 10). So said the preacher who wrote our book of Ecclesiastes. Play while you work.

But there is another side to the matter. Work while you play. Be just as honest and earnest, as ready to take the hard end of the game as you must be when you work. Play is meant to rest us and to train our powers of mind and body. You are not playing right if your play does not make you stronger and better. There are good plays and bad plays, plays that make you better and stronger, and plays that make you weaker and worse. There are right and wrong ways of playing even the games that are good. The boy or girl who plays good games, and plays them well, will be ready to work right and find it play by-and-by.

So learn to play right.

22

THREE RIVERS AND WHERE THEY WENT

ON the walls of the prayer-meeting room of a church I know, there is a relief map of Palestine and of the countries roundabout. A relief map, you know, is one on which the mountains and hill country are raised up, and the valleys sunk in, so you can tell by looking at it what parts of the country are high and which are low. Now on this map of Palestine, of course, the great mountain chain is Lebanon, beginning in the north of Palestine and running north along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea for a good many miles. Right along with it to the east, but lower most of the way, is what we know as Anti-Lebanon, with its highest peak at the southern end, Mount Hermon. Mount Hermon is so high that the snow is never all gone from its sides. It keeps on melting all summer long.

From the melting of those snows three rivers take their rise. I noticed them one evening as I looked up at that map. One flows eastward down the mountain slope. It is quite a river. Not far out on the desert it flows through the city of Damascus, and makes it a green and fertile city,

one of the most beautiful to look upon from a distance in all the world. But pretty soon, as it flows on into the desert, it melts away, is all gone, swallowed up in the sand or sucked up by the hot sun. That is the river called Abana in the Old Testament.

Another river flows southward. Issuing from a great cavern in the mountainside it plunges rapidly down hill in a deep valley, so low and hot and steamy most of the way that no one can live beside it. The very peasants that till the soil there have to live far up on the hillsides. At last it empties into the most salt and bitter lake in the world, thirteen hundred feet below the sea, a lake in which no fish can live, and which spreads death and desolation all around. That river is the Jordan.

Another river rises between those two mountain chains and flows northward. Great cities have always stood along its course, one of them, Antioch, one of the greatest cities of that eastern world. It turns west after a while, and becomes so broad and grand that boats can float in it up to Antioch; and then at last it flows into the Mediterranean Sea. It is the Orontes, a beautiful and useful river all the way, finding its home at last in the sunlit sea.

As I looked on that map, I thought, that is just like human lives. All of them come fresh from God. Some are fair and beautiful at first, and perhaps they do some good. But they idle along like

the Abana, not trying to go anywhere or do anything, and before long they are just gone. They amount to nothing. Some others start high up, but they go the wrong way down hill, and they make no end of mischief with their headlong ways, and at last they make a miserable end of it all, empty into some foul, ill-smelling Dead Sea. And other lives are always bright and useful. They enliven things wherever they go. They bear up others, and carry them toward their goal, just like the beautiful Orontes.

Now you can make your lives just what you want them to be. You can be Abanas, or Jordans, or Orontes. You are that now, and you are started already for the sands of the desert, or the bitter Dead Sea, or the great shining Mediterranean. Which way do you want to go?

23

A BOY, A DOG, AND A STICK

I WAS down on the beach beside Lake Michigan with a picnic party one evening, and the friends we were with had a dog. He went down by the water, and then barked and barked, and picked up a stick and brought it and laid it at the feet of a small boy, until the boy picked up the stick and

threw it as far out on the lake as his little arms could make it go. With a yelp of delight the dog was after it, caught it in his mouth, and brought it back, and laid it again at the boy's feet, wagging his tail and barking to have it thrown again. And again and again the boy threw it, and no matter how far out the stick went, the dog dashed into the water and brought it back.

What do you suppose he did it for? The stick was no good to him. He could not eat it, nor build with it, nor use it in any other way. Nor was it any good to anyone else. If it had been, and had been floating on the water, once bringing it in would have been enough.

The dog was doing it just for fun, and for nothing else in the world. He loved to dash off into the water as fast as he could, and make all the splash he could, and bring back that stick just as if it were a very important thing. He would have kept on doing it until he was tired out.

Now suppose the stick had been worth something, and the dog had been sent after it. Do you suppose it would have been any less fun to the dog? I don't think so. Suppose the water had been full of sticks, each one of them worth something. I suppose the dog would have gone after every one of them with just as much fun as he did after that one.

Suppose it had been a boy or girl? If they had been swimming or even wading after that stick

just for fun, they would have had just as much fun as the dog did. But suppose it had been going after sticks that were needed, say, to make a fire. That would have been work, and I can imagine some boys and girls would have lopped around, and said it was too hard, and there was no fun in it, and would have groaned and sulked and perhaps would have said that they wouldn't do it. I have seen boys, and I have seen girls too, who acted just that way. Indeed, I have acted a good deal that way myself.

When I was a boy there was a planing mill several blocks from my home. I used to go down and get edgings and scraps of lumber in order to cut them up and make things just for my own amusement. Those loads were heavy, and I dragged them for blocks up the hill; but it wasn't work, it was fun. Out back of the house was a woodpile, and my father wanted me to bring in wood enough to keep the wood-box full every day. That was work, and oh! how heavy it seemed, and how I hated to carry it, although it was far lighter than my edgings. I am afraid I didn't carry it sometimes.

But there are boys and girls who can make their tasks into fun. It is only a matter of thinking right about them. Most of our play is harder than our work. Suppose we should try to make the work into play—I mean, go at it as if it were a game, with all the enthusiasm and delight we

put into play. I did make some of my tasks easy by imagining I was playing a game. For example, in carrying that wood, if I could only think I was an engine hauling a logging train, and every stick a log, it would become fun.

There are about three classes of people in the world. There are those who, like that dog, are always chasing the same old stick, just for fun. They are the idlers, the sports. There are others who are piling up sticks to be sure, but always groaning and grumping and having a hard time over their work, and doing just as little as they possibly can. There are others who are piling their sticks and having fun all the time. They are the people who are happy in their work, who do the world's big jobs, and go to the front every time.

You boys and girls are beginning to belong to one of these classes by the way you do your work now. Which do you want to be?

24

A MACHINE THAT RUNS AWAY WITH US

DID any of you boys and girls ever learn to ride a bicycle? If you did, what happened when you first got on it and started off? Didn't

you find that that wheel had notions of its own as to where it wanted to go, and they were not at all your notions as to where you wanted to go? If there was a stone in the road, that wheel wanted to go over it. If there was a rut, it wanted to get into it. If there was a team of horses, that wheel wanted to ride over them. I have heard people who have learned to run automobiles say that they acted the same way. The machines wanted to climb trees, straddle ditches, go into the front doors of houses, and do other absurd things. The first thing we have to do with any machine is to learn to control it, and not let it run away with us and wreck itself and us too.

There are some other things that need to be controlled besides machines.

I remember meeting with a class of which I was a member. It was twenty-five years since we had graduated. There were some of my classmates I hadn't seen in all that time. I remember one of them. He did not look very well. I visited him in his home afterward, and he looked worse. I learned that he could do no business. He never had done much. That evening he smoked cigarettes just about as fast as he could light them. At the table he asked me if I would have a glass of wine. No, I didn't drink wine. Beer, then? No, I didn't drink beer. Would I have a cigar? No, I didn't smoke. "Walker, don't you have any redeeming vices?" I laughed, for it was a new

remark to me, but I had to acknowledge I couldn't remember any.

We met again five years after, but he was not with us, and he will never meet with us again. His vices have killed him. And more than that, I cannot recall one of my classmates who had his vices who ever meets with us. Most of them are dead.

The trouble with them all was that they did not control their own bodies, and their bodies ran away with them and wrecked them. Body said, "I want everything that tastes good or feels good." The man did not have the grit to say to his body, "You shall have nothing but what really is good for you and for me too." Body had its way, and it killed the man.

Three times in the King James version of our Bible, you will find the word "temperance." In the Revised Version, in every case you will find instead the word "self-control." Self-control means doing with yourself just what you have to learn to do with your bicycle, your automobile, or any other machine. It means making yourself, and that means your body first of all, do just what you want it to do. It means running your body, and not letting your body run you.

Self-control begins early, or it is lost early. Body says very early, "I want candy, cake, pie, soda water, ice-cream, all kinds of sweets." Some boys and girls say, "All right, you can have them every time I can get them for you." Some of

those things, perhaps all of them, are food in small quantities, but every one of them is bad in large quantities. But body doesn't stop with small quantities. It says, "I want them," and that settles it. By-and-by body wants something stronger, beer, wine, whiskey, brandy, opium, drugs. Body running the man instead of man running the body; body gets them, and ruin comes.

I want every boy and girl to have sand enough to say, "Here, Mr. Body, don't you think you can have everything you want. I want you to understand I'm running this institution, and you don't get one thing more than I know is good for you." That's the boy or girl who is going to grow up strong and do big things.

25

FAITH

I REMEMBER a story which I heard Professor Chamberlain of Chicago Seminary tell a good many years ago. He had a boy who was weak and sickly, and had to be carried a great deal. Once, as Professor Chamberlain was starting to carry him down-stairs, the boy threw his arms around his father's neck and said, "You won't let me fall, will

you, Papa?"—Just a timid little lad, dreadfully afraid of falling, and yet knowing that his father would hold him fast, but clinging to him as if he weren't quite sure after all.

We have all been there, haven't we? We have come to the places where we had to trust somebody else. Perhaps it was when you were a child and were out walking with father. You came to a wet, muddy place in the road which your small feet could not cross. Then father took you in his arms and carried you over, and all you had to do was to put your arms around his neck and let him.

When we are grown, how much we have to trust other people! We ride on the railroad train. We cannot guide the locomotive on its way through the wilderness of tracks and across the plains and mountains. We have to trust someone else to do it. We sail the ocean. We cannot steer the ship through storms and rocks and twisted channels. We have to trust someone else to do that. We have a house to build, a watch to mend, a tool to make. We cannot do these things for ourselves. We have to let someone else make them for us. We cannot delve into all the mines of truth which we need. We have to let someone else do it for us, and trust them to tell us what the truth is. We have some money to keep. If we are wise, we do not keep it for ourselves. We put it in the bank. The officers might steal it and cheat us, but we have to trust them, and on the

whole it is far, far safer to let them take care of it than to take care of it for ourselves.

Now, every time we let somebody do something for us that we cannot do for ourselves, we put faith in them. That is what faith is. It means first believing that others can do the thing which we cannot do for ourselves. But it is more than that. It is letting them do it, and doing our part, putting our arms around father's neck, going on board the train or the ship, giving the jeweller our broken watch, putting our money in the bank.

That is just what Jesus, and Paul, and all the rest mean by faith in God. It is letting God help us with our sins. It is believing He can do it, and it is doing our part, opening our hearts to Him, putting our arms, as it were, about God's neck. We cannot see God. We seldom do see the people we trust. We can put faith in Him just the same.

26

THE HERO WHO WAS A SERVANT

WHO is the nobleman; who, I mean, have men counted the noblemen of the world? Hasn't it been those who were rich and proud and able to make others work for them, while they enjoyed their ease? Or, at most, those who spent

their time in hunting and war? That has been the way of the world in all the centuries, and is the way to-day more or less. Especially was it true of the Greeks and Romans centuries ago. Even their gods were beings who sat on Mount Olympus and feasted and had gay times.

Yet for all that, those same Greeks and Romans had the story of one hero whom they loved above all others. His name was Hercules. He ought to have been a king, but he was cheated out of his throne by a mean trick. The rest of his life he spent as a servant, just as good as a slave in those days.

But oh! the wonderful stories the Greeks and Romans told of his deeds! They said that when he was only a few months old, with his baby fists he was able to kill two enormous serpents that were sent to devour him. When he grew to manhood, he killed a great, shaggy lion that had been ravaging the flocks of the neighbourhood, and thereafter wore its skin in place of a coat. He was chiefly famous, however, for what were called his twelve labours or great works. I could not tell you all of them, but he had monsters to kill, lions and hydras, and dragons and boars. He chased a stag with brazen hoofs and golden horns, and finally brought it home with him. He brought three golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides, far away in the west. Once he had to clean a stable. That seems a small thing to do;

but this was a very dirty stable, for three thousand oxen had been kept there for thirty years without its having been cleaned. Hercules cleaned it in a single day by turning a river into it. I could not begin to tell you of all the wicked kings he fought and killed, or all the little deeds of kindness he did by the way.

Now wasn't it strange that those proud and idle Greeks and Romans should have counted as their greatest hero a man like that? We should not have expected it. I think the only explanation is that even in those far-off times men had begun to learn the lesson that the greatest man is the man who does the most for the world. He is the servant of other men. He is always watching for ways in which he may right wrongs, help the poor and suffering and needy, and make the world better for his having lived in it. It was the lesson Jesus taught His disciples, and it was the way He lived Himself. Hercules was so far a Jesus Christ to the Greeks and Romans before Jesus ever lived.

Boys and girls, learn to be like toiling Hercules. Try to do all the good you can every time you can. Begin now by watching for the little tasks you can do to make the world better. Jesus said that such men were the true noblemen, and the world is coming to think so too.

"He that would be greatest of all, let him be your servant."

27

A NEWSBOY ON HIS ROUTE

IT was the blackest of black nights. There was no moon, and heavy clouds hid every star in the sky. A newsboy had a route out on the edge of the town. There were never many lights out there, the houses were far apart, some of them several blocks away from each other, and the route was frequently a mere footpath across the fields. This night there was something wrong at the power house, and there were no lights at all, either on the streets or in the houses, except as they had kerosene lamps to light. To add to it all, there was a bitter wind blowing in from the lake. No wonder that the boy on that route, the hardest any boy had, came home and threw his bag of papers down.

"What's the matter, Harold?" inquired his mother.

"I'm not going to-night. There isn't a light out there."

"But the people are expecting their papers, son," remarked the father. "Besides the paper hires you to carry out these papers, and it expects you to do it."

"I'll go in the morning. It's too dark to-night."

"But the people want their papers to-night.

They will have no time to read in the morning. Besides, they're expecting you, and you do not want to fail them."

The boy shivered and hesitated, and his lip trembled a little. The father was a preacher. It was Saturday night and the Sunday morning sermon was waiting the finishing touches in the study. But he thought, "There is only one way. I don't blame the boy for being afraid. I hate to go myself, it is so dark and so far and so cold; but I won't ask the boy to go where I won't go myself. It must be spooky going over that part of the city all alone." The next minute he was putting on his overcoat.

"Come on, son, I'll go with you. We mustn't disappoint people about their papers."

The boy did not wait now. If father would go along it was all right. The fact was, he had been a little afraid. He was only a slip of a boy.

The way proved darker and harder than even the father had imagined. There were breaks in the sidewalks, and you could only feel your way, and guess where the houses must be. Then the paths across the fields could not be seen, only felt with your feet. Here and there they were crossed by ditches. The boy knew every foot of the way, but the only way the two could keep together was for the father to put his hand on the boy's shoulder and let him guide. Then there was always the chance of dogs rushing out. The newsboy can

never understand why folks want to keep dogs anyhow, unless it be to make life miserable for newsboys. They may not bite, but they make a lot of fuss as to what they might do. But the two stuck together and went the whole round, and not a man failed to get his paper that night on that route. Then the father went back to his study and his sermon, and probably it was not hurt at all by the memory of the darkness and the cold out on the newsboy's route.

The newsboy needed that lesson only once. He carried papers in that town for a good many years, but he never went back on his route again, and never again needed anyone to go with him. I suspect that dark nights he felt father's hand on his shoulder, and took courage and went on.

We may none of us be newsboys, but we all have hard tasks, tasks which take all the grit we have. Somebody is depending on us to do those tasks. Somebody will be disappointed if they are not done. Somebody trusted us. Are we going to fail?

Not always is there a father to put a hand on our shoulder and go with us. But there is a Heavenly Father who goes with us. We do not see Him, but He is there. And He sent our elder brother, Jesus, to live with us, and bear our burdens with us, and be tempted just as we are. If we think of Him, we can be sure God's hand is on our shoulder in the darkest night.

28

TAKING ONE'S SELF IN HAND

PROBABLY there isn't one of you boys and girls who has not seen a dog who can do tricks it has been taught. Perhaps some of you have been to a dog show, where a lot of dogs will do some of the most wonderful things, riding ponies, turning somersaults, dancing, and so on. Horses are even more wonderful than dogs. They learn faster and like to do their tricks. I have seen horses that seemed to know how to count, add, spell and do such strange things.

Last summer I saw some trained seals. A seal seems an awkward animal. But these seals could balance balls on their snouts, and bat them back and forth in a perfectly amazing way, all just with their snouts. The one I watched would clap its own foreflippers after each of its own tricks.

Strangest of all, perhaps, is the fact that lions can be tamed and trained, so that men can enter their dens, make them jump hurdles, sit on pedestals, form pyramids, and do other wonderful things. How do they do it?

First of all, to train animals, one must love animals. There is no use in one who does not love animals trying to train them. It cannot be done.

Then the trainer must spend hours and hours of time with them. The lion trainer, for instance, spends most of his days first around the cage outside, then inside. So the big beasts become used to him.

Then the trainer must have no end of patience. The animals are entirely willing to do what you want them to do if only they know just what it is, but it is hard for them to understand what it is.

Animals have their curious moods and ways, the same as men. I have read the story of a woman trainer who one day could not make a lioness named Spitfire do her trick. She tried and tried, but Spitfire would not do her part. Then she sent for the owner of the lions, and he entered the cage, stepped three feet nearer the lioness, lifted his whip, and Spitfire growled but did her part. Then the man turned his back on the other lions and beat a tattoo with his whip on the floor of the cage. Spitfire's mate, Brutus, thought he was going to injure her, sprang at him and seized his arm. The woman trainer simply put her arms around the lion's neck and fired her pistol close to his ear. That was the signal for Brutus and the rest to take their pedestals. Habit made the big lion forget everything else, and he sprang to his place.

Last of all, the trainer must always reward his animals for doing their tricks with a piece of meat. That makes them ready to do them again.

Wonderful that men can train animals. But an

animal never trains himself. He never says, "There is something I want to do, and I am going to stick to it till I learn how to do it." He never says or thinks, "There is something I do which I ought not to do, and I am going to break myself of that habit." Men are the only creatures who can do that, and that makes men higher than animals.

I wonder if you have ever done that with yourself, boys and girls. Everyone of us knows there is something about us which ought to be different, some bad habit, some failure, some weakness, which when we think of it we want to be rid of. Well, be rid of it. Take yourself in hand as the trainer takes his animals.

Simply say to yourself, "I am not going to do that wrong thing," or, "I am going to do that right thing." Say it often. Say it every day. Say it several times a day. Think how fine it would be to master yourself just there. Perhaps you can find a Bible verse that forbids or commands that very thing which you can say over and over to yourself. Then pray to God to help you. He will, and you can conquer yourself.

29

ANTS AND MEN

OF all the wonderful creatures of God's world there are none more wonderful than the ants. Probably there are more of them. They are found more widely scattered. They know how to fit into more kinds of climate and soil and all other things. They have such wonderful ways and show what seem to be such wonderful minds. They build wonderful nests. They clear the ground for those nests. They make them of different depths to fit different seasons. They carry their eggs and young up and down, out into the air or back into the deepest parts of the nests just according to the season. They know just how to store up food so it will not spoil or grow fungi. They know how to make other insects serve them. The aphids which live on the leaves of plants and trees are a kind of ant cow, which the ants care for as carefully as men care for their cattle. There is such perfect order in a colony of ants. Every ant knows his place, and does his work. I should say "her," for nearly all the ants we ever see are females. They have their classes, mother ants, father ants, workers, and some kinds of ants have soldiers. There is no quarrelling and nobody slouching his work in an ant colony. They are

tremendous workers, and they always work together.

Doesn't it seem as if they put us human beings to shame? There isn't a city where men dwell that is as well managed as a colony of ants. They know right from the start what to do. An ant six months old knows more about his tasks than a human boy or girl does when he is six years old.

Yes, but the trouble is that if that ant should live to be sixty years old, it would never know any more than when it was six months old. Ants always do things as they always have done them. Ants now are living just as ants lived ten thousand years ago. They never learn anything. That is where men get ahead of ants. Ants stopped thousands of years ago. Men are learning and growing every year. This church is lighted by electricity. When I was a boy there wasn't an electric light in the world. There's a telephone downstairs. I was a student in the high school before I ever saw a telephone. Last night when I got off the train, there was an electric car waiting. I remember the first electric car I ever saw. This summer I saw my first airplane. One of my teachers in the university was a brother of the man who made the first airplane. All those wonderful inventions within my lifetime, one of them within yours. There is no limit to what men can do. They can learn, and they are the only ones of God's creatures that can learn very much.

So God put men, not ants, at the head of His creation. It is not where we start but where we can get to that counts. And you are in school, Sunday-school, church and home to learn. Learn all you can. Climb as high as you can. Be just as faithful as the ant is, and then see what will come.

30

WASPS AND MEN

I SPOKE last Sunday of those wonderful little creatures that are so much like men in some ways, so much wiser it sometimes seems, and yet so much below men, because they never learn, never grow wiser,—the ants.

There are some other little creatures that are much like men. I mean the bees and the wasps. Some of them are wonderful builders. They know just how to make the cells of their nests so that they are perfect in form, as strong as they can be made, just the right size, and waste no space. They know how to preserve their honey so it will not spoil. Some of them make paper. Some are masons, and build nests out of mud which they carry from a distance and work into shape just as a mason does his mortar.

Perhaps the most wonderful thing about them is the way they care for their little ones. A wasp never sees its own children. Mother wasp lays her eggs and then soon lies down and dies. Her work is done. But she has made ready for the little ones she will never see. Most wasp babies feed on caterpillars, or flies, or beetles, or something of that kind. So mother wasp digs or builds her nest, and captures all the caterpillars, or flies, or beetles her baby wasp can eat, and fills the nest with them. But it will be some little time before the egg she lays in the nest is hatched. It will not do to let the caterpillars and flies spoil. Then baby wasp likes fresh meat to eat. Now mother wasp must make her captured prey stay still in the nest, but if she kills it, it will spoil. She has to sting it in order to carry it at all. But somehow she knows just where to sting it so that it is paralyzed, so that it cannot move, and yet so that it will not die. The fly or beetle will live that way for days and days in the nest, and when baby wasp finally comes out of its egg, and wants breakfast, there it is, nice fresh fly meat, all ready, prepared by the mother it will never see. The mother has gone further, and even put a stone so carefully over the nest door that no one who did not see her build her nest would ever suspect it was there. So baby wasp is perfectly safe.

I do not see how anyone can ever study about wasps and not believe that there is a good God

who cares for all His creatures, and thinks wonderful things, and puts them into these tiny brains.

But for all that, wasps are wonderfully like men. They study. When a wasp wants to come back to her nest, she will study all about it. She will fly all around again and again. She will light on all the bushes and weeds and look over the landscape. Then she will fly miles away and come back. That is, she generally will. Some wasps are careless and don't study and lose their way, but not often. But if while mother wasp is gone you change the landscape, cut away the grass and weeds, change the bushes, stir up the ground, mother wasp is confused just as you and I would be, and can seldom find her way back.

Some wasps know how to save themselves trouble. First, they find their caterpillar or beetle, and having stung it, hunt around for a good place close by, and dig it and put in the food and lay the egg. Some wasps do not stop to think. They build their nest. Then they go hunting. It may be they will have to go a long way off before they find their bugs. Then they have to carry them all that long way. They could save themselves so much work if they would only stop and think. Sometimes they simply can't carry their prey so far. Folks are that way too.

Most wasps plan just right and build their nests in the right place after studying all about it. Others are regular flutter budgets. They begin to

dig at any old place, make the earth fly, work furiously, then suddenly discover that that isn't a good place after all. Off they fly and begin again just as furiously. That may not suit, and off they go and begin again. A wasp may start four or five nests before getting one in just the right place, and like as not the last is no better than the others.

Haven't you seen boys and girls and men and women just that way? They are always making a tremendous fuss, but they do not get much done, because they haven't stopped to think ahead and to plan. They haven't worked with their heads. Can't we all learn a lesson from the wasps, and every day think, plan, make our heads save our hands and our feet? That is what God gave us brains for.

31

THE FLATWORM AND SOME PEOPLE DESCENDED FROM HIM

YOU know they say that one is never too old to learn. I have been finding it out this summer, for I have been learning a lot of new things.

The other day I was reading about the flatworms. Did you ever see a flatworm? I never

did. Did you ever hear about them? I didn't until this summer. They are not angleworms, and not very much like angleworms. They are worms and they crawl about, but they are softer and more jelly like and flatter than angleworms. They have broad heads running out into points on each side, and they taper down to a sort of blunt tail. They don't know very much, and they don't do very much.

For one thing, they don't know how to quit growing when they get long enough for a good, respectable flatworm. They keep on growing longer. And then a curious thing happens. A new head begins to form somewhere down the line from the head to the tail. At first the old head runs the whole worm. But, by-and-by, some day, the old head says, "Well, I'm going in this direction," and the new head says, "I'm not. I'm going to stay right here." The old head starts to crawl, and the new head sticks to the ground, or whatever it is on, and won't budge. The old head keeps pulling ahead, and the new head sticks as if it were nailed, and they have a regular tug-of-war. If the flatworm could talk, I can imagine what the two heads would say to each other. But they can't talk. They can just pull.

Then all of a sudden the worm breaks in two, just in the middle. The old head takes all of the old body down to the break and crawls off to suit itself. The new head takes all the body behind it

and crawls off by itself. There are just two flatworms where there was one before. They couldn't live together, so they go off, each by itself.

Now men know better than that, don't they? They can live together in one family, as men and women, and boys and girls. They are never tied together as the two heads of the flatworm, and perhaps that is one reason why they can live together in families, and in cities, and in all sorts of groups and crowds. Men can agree together.

But once in a while there are men and women, and boys and girls, who haven't got beyond the flatworm stage. The leader says: "Now we will do this." This flatworm-human says, "Well, I won't. I want to stay right here and do what I like." Then the words begin to fly, and if it comes to the worst, there is a family row, and lots of trouble. The whole trouble is flatworm men and women, and flatworm boys and girls. I suppose they have all descended from flatworms or something like flatworms anyhow, and they haven't descended very far. There are some whole families made up of just that sort of creatures. Perhaps we have all been that way sometimes, stubborn and disobedient to those who had the right to lead and control. There isn't so much excuse for us as there is for the flatworm. He is just built that way and can't help it. We can.

I suppose it makes no difference to the flatworms. They just crawl off and that is the end of

it. It isn't the end with us. A quarrelsome family,with a lot of people, men or women, boys or girls, who are always saying, "I will," and "I won't," is a very unhappy place to be in.

So look out. Don't be flatworms. Be men and women. Live peaceably. Be obedient. That is the way to happy homes and happy groups.

32

TWO DOGS

THERE were once two dogs, boys and girls, on the same farm out in Kansas. They were named Major and Ponto. They weren't much alike. Major was a handsome dog, with long, black hair, a little brown on the under parts, and a bushy tail. He was a friendly sort of dog, always around the house, especially at meal times. He was a powerful feeder, was Major, and always on the outlook for any tidbits that were thrown out to him. For the rest, he barked at all the teams that went by, and whisked about the cattle, and looked very brave and fine.

Ponto wasn't much of a dog to look at. He was lank, and his fur was scraggy and rough. He slunk along with a hangdog look and gait. He never came up on the porch, but slunk around the backyard and under the shed. Indeed, he seldom

stayed around the house during the day. Wherever the team went, he went, and whenever any work was going on, he was on hand. Major seldom took that trouble.

That was in the days when Kansas was new. There were few fences around the farms, large stretches of open prairie, a good many prairie chickens, and a great many rabbits—cottontails—much to the injury of the farmer's orchards. The farmers were only too glad to get rid of them, and Ponto was a famous rabbit hunter. Seldom a day passed that he did not start up one of the cottontails, and when he did there was a lively time. Down the corn row or across the prairie went the rabbit, a streak of brown and a dash of white, and Ponto after him, all legs and nose, a streak of black. Mr. Rabbit might double and turn as he would, Ponto was always after him, and seldom did he fail to get him. Then he dined on rabbit.

Major didn't chase rabbits very much. He never scared one up for himself. Sometimes he started out after Ponto, but it was too hard work, and he soon gave it up. It ruffled his coat and sweat him up. This rabbit was too small, and that one too large, and the other too far off. He didn't care much about rabbit meat anyhow. Cold cornbread and bacon gravy were better. So Ponto got the rabbits, and Major kept his form.

Do you know, I think there are some folks that are just like Major. They don't like to work too

hard. It makes them warm and nervous. "What's the use? This job is too hard, and that one doesn't pay well enough, and the other is disagreeable." They want soft snaps, lots of pay, and little to do. They want fun and frolic. I've seen Majors in college and in high school and in business and on the ball ground.

Then there are Pontos. They are out for game and they propose to get it. "Hard work? What of it? Dirty? Never mind. There is plenty of soap and water. Job small? It's the best for now, a better will come some day." Such folks are worth while. They do the world's work. They make it easier for others to live. And in the long run, they get the joy and satisfaction out of life.

Do you know there was one of the Hebrew wise men who must have seen some Majors and Pontos in his day? He didn't believe in fat, stylish, lazy Majors, dogs or men. He wanted everybody to be a Ponto, and all the time. He wanted them to begin to be Pontos early, for it is pretty certain that what people start out to be, they will continue to be.

So this Hebrew wise man wrote,—and you will find it in Ecclesiastes 9:10—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." "Whatsoever,"—that means everything. If you are hunting rabbits, don't let any rabbits get away from you. Be a Ponto, not a Major.

33

THE WOLF'S CALL IN THE NIGHT

LATE one afternoon a sailing craft was driven by a storm into the safe shelter of a snug little harbour on the Newfoundland coast. There was an Indian village on the shore, and as usual a pack of dogs which were used to draw the sledges in winter, and grew half wild in summer. On the vessel was a friend of mine who was a great naturalist, always studying the ways of the wild creatures in the woods.

Just as the sun was going down he noticed that the dogs were acting excited on the rocks miles back from the village, each running off on his own track, and again all gathering in a circle, ears alert and noses sniffing the air. He could not understand what it was all about. Finally it was explained as over the rocky hills came the long-drawn howl of a wolf. The dogs made answer with loud barks and cries, and the wolf answered them again. So the clamour kept up for some time. It was as if the wolf were summoning the dogs to break away from the village and come and join in the wild, free life of the woods, and the dogs were expressing their longing to go, but that something after all held them back. At last my

friend saw the gaunt form of the wolf striding away over the eastern mountain, and all grew still.

It was all clear what had excited the dogs to their frantic barking. They had sniffed the wolf before they heard him howl, or perhaps had heard him before the howl had come to my friend's ears. And the dogs were half wolves. Long centuries ago their ancestors were wolves. No one knows how long ago that was, for I think no remains have been found of man so far back that the remains of his faithful friend the dog were not with them. But through all the centuries the wolf nature has not been entirely subdued. It is in the blood, and the wolf's howl comes as a challenge to the dog to break loose from the bondage of man and join once more in the wild, free life of the woods, and go on the nightly hunt. But he cannot break away from his centuries with man. He can only cry back to answer the wolf's howl.

The dog is not the only animal that carries in his blood memories of old wolf days. Here is man himself who carries in his blood memories of the days when his forefathers were as wild, and selfish, and bloodthirsty almost as the wolf. They were more cunning and cruel even than the brutes around them; and through all the centuries the old wolf nature has never been entirely cast out. It has not been put down even as much as it has in the dog, for the dog never breaks away and goes back to the wolf life. But oftentimes when the

wolf cry comes to men, the challenge to be cruel and cunning and bloodthirsty and mean and selfish, the wolf in our hearts answers, not with cries only, but with deeds. That is what all our wrong deeds are, the wolf within us answering the wolf without.

Our great business in life is to get the brutal wolf nature in us tamed down or cast out. When we have done it in our own souls, then are we no longer children of wolves but children of God. And when we get it cast out of all men, then will the kingdom of God come in this world.

34

BREAKING A PATH

WE have had a snow storm this past week, haven't we? I wonder if you boys and girls have found any snow-drifts? What did you do when you found one? There are just three things one can do when he finds a snow-drift in his path: he can turn back and not go any further, or he can find the end of the drift if there be one and go around it, or he can go through it.

On going to church one Sunday morning last winter, I came to a snow-drift right across the

path. It wasn't very long, and everybody else had gone around it. I never liked going around things when the right way was through them. I was well shod, and it occurred to me that I was the man to break path through that drift. So through it I went.

After church I came back over the same path, and just as I expected, everybody that had come after me had gone through the drift where I had, and they had worn quite a path. Once someone had broken a path, others were ready to follow.

Now, a snow-drift doesn't amount to much, especially when it takes only a few more steps to go around it. But there are a good many drifts in the world that amount to a good deal. There are drifts of customs and habits and fashions that are great nuisances, and cost no end of inconvenience and money and toil and suffering. There are drifts of real wrongs. They are not laws which we must obey, but they are just ways in which things have always been done. We have always done them that way, and our fathers did them so before us. There is no other reason for doing them that way.

What is needed is somebody, or several somebodies, to break through the drift. When they have done so, all the rest of us will follow, and the drift will bar the path no more. But it is hard to break drift. People laugh at you and call you a fool. So most of us are just path followers in-

stead of path breakers, and we crack our jokes at the people making the new paths. By-and-by the new path is made, and then we walk in it and find it much more convenient, and wonder why somebody did not break that path for us before.

Boys and girls, learn to be path breakers. I mean, find out what things are right, and then strike out for them, no matter what other people are doing or saying. Of course, be sure that you are right. Sometimes things seem right to us because we haven't thought far enough to find out how wrong they are. Other people see better than we do. But when we know that a certain thing is right, and especially where others acknowledge that it is right, only they are too lazy or too cowardly to do it, strike out for yourselves—break path.

Be a man something like ex-President Wilson. He found a lot of old customs and ways of doing things that were just drifts, and he broke through them. People have laughed and scolded and grown angry, but the drifts are broken through, and men will follow where he has led.

35

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE OF ALL

YOU remember, do you not, the parable of the talents? A man was going on a long journey to a strange land. Those were the days when it was not very safe to travel. There were too many robbers, and the ships were not very safe. No one wanted to carry more money with him than he had to. There were no banks in which to leave it, or any places that were safe. And this man had a lot of money. By weight it was equal to about $16,000.00 of our money, but it would have bought several times as much as $16,000.00 would to-day. So the man called to him his servants that could be trusted, and to one he gave five talents, $10,000.00, and to another two talents, $4,000.00, and to another one talent, $2,000.00; and he said to them, "It's yours to use till I come back." Then he went on his journey.

Now these three men had to decide how to take care of their master's money. Those that had received the $10,000.00 and the $4,000.00 lost no time in deciding. The best way to keep money was to put it to some wise use. So they went into business. Of course, they might have lost it in business, but they might have lost it if they hadn't

gone into business, too. It was worth while making the risk anyway. And they didn't lose. They were successful in business, just as their master had thought they would be, or he wouldn't have given them the money. When he came back, one of them had $20,000.00, and the other had $8,000,00. He was pleased, and said they had done well.

Then came the man who had received one talent, $2,000.00. He had reasoned this way: "It is very risky going into business. I might lose all this money. Then how angry the master would be with me." So what he did was to go out to some secret place in the woods or in some valley, and dig a hole, and bury the money. Of course, someone might have seen him and stolen it, or someone might have come on it by accident, or he might have forgotten the place, or a lot of other things might have happened. But the one thing that did happen was that all the time his master was gone, that $2,000.00 was just the same as if it did not exist. It wasn't doing anybody the least bit of good. When his master came back, he went and dug up the money, and brought back the very same gold pieces he had been given long ago. Then he crowed about how wise and careful he had been.

And the master said he had been a fool. He really had robbed him. If he had kept the money himself he would have used it and by this time he would have had more money. If he had given it

to either of his other servants, they would have done the same. The servant who had been so afraid of making a mistake that he had done nothing had made the biggest mistake of all, and ought to be punished, and he was punished for robbing his master.

Boys and girls, the men who do things in this world make mistakes, every one of them. Abraham Lincoln was a very wise man, and he did great things in his day. But he made mistakes. We have forgotten about them, but the people of his own day did not forget them. They were always talking about his mistakes. Lincoln just went on and did things.

About the greatest artist that ever lived in this world was Michelangelo. He was a great architect and a great painter and a great sculptor. I once asked a fellow student who had just come back from Italy what he thought of Michelangelo. He said, " Well, he would do well enough if he had ever finished anything. There are brush marks on all his paintings and chisel marks on all his statues." He had made mistakes, but he had given the world some of its greatest paintings and statues. He was too busy and too fiery not to make mistakes.

General Grant once made a mistake. He let himself be caught down at Shiloh, in Tennessee, and his army was given a fearful whipping. I read just last evening how Sherman, a great gen-

eral himself, thought that all was lost, and how he hunted up Grant that evening, wading through the mud till he found him leaning against the wet trunk of a tree, the best spot he could find to spend the night. Sherman remarked that they had had a whipping, and he had meant to go on and say that they had better retreat across the Tennessee River, and try to pull themselves together. All that Grant said was, "Lick 'em to-morrow." And sure enough, he did lick them to-morrow, and turned his mistake into a great victory.

I once heard a great preacher say, "The man who never made a blunder hasn't yet been born. If he had been, he would have died right away." There isn't one of us that may not make a mistake. Never mind. Go ahead and do the best you can. The biggest mistake you can ever make is to do nothing. Make your mistakes and then forget them, only never make the same mistake twice. God and the world will forget them, too, if only you do something worth while.

36

WISDOM IN THE STREETS

THERE are some sights and sounds in the large cities which we do not have in the small places. Sometimes we may hear the bell of the scissors-grinder, and I have lived in a place where every summer we had the horn of the ice-cream cone man. There are few places where we do not have the call of the newsboy, and generally the busmen and the hotel runners have their cries at the stations and docks. But in the great city these are multiplied manyfold. I have heard cries of ice, rags, fruit, and vegetables. Out in Denver I used to hear a strange cry down the street every day. It was some distance away from my room, and I could not make out what the man was saying. It sounded like, "Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!" One day I happened to be on the street just as he was going by, and I got his cry at last. He was selling fresh oysters. In the city of Strassburg there was a most sepulchral wail that sometimes greeted our ears: "Kohlen! Kohlen!" It was the charcoal man trundling his cart and letting people know he was there. The further east you go around the world, the more such cries you hear. In Naples they drive cows and goats

through the street and summon people to come and get their milk, and they can see it milked before their door. In the cities of the Orient every tradesman on the street has his cry. The places where they congregate most are in the broader squares into which the narrow streets open, and the open spaces before the city gates.

Now all these men are simply going with whatever they have to sell where people are who may want to buy, and they are letting people know what they have to offer. If you have anything for people, you must go where people are. It is not only the men with things to sell who must go into the streets and broad places. The men with things to tell must go there too. So the prophets in giving their messages to men had to go to the squares and before the gates. When the prophets were no more heard, when no man felt that God had called him to be a prophet, the teachers that followed them and would not call themselves prophets went into these places to tell men their wisdom and to talk with them about the way to live and the laws of God.

"Wisdom crieth aloud in the street,
She uttereth her voice in the broad places."

This writer of Proverbs speaks as if wisdom were a woman crying her wares in the street. Of course, it was really the Hebrew wise men who

were doing it. It was true of them just as it was of the wise man of Athens, Socrates:

"He was always in public; for early in the morning he went into the highways and the gymnasia, and when the market-place was crowded, there he was to be seen, and for the rest he was always during the day where he was likely to meet the most people" (Xenophon).

And because wisdom was so common, crying her wares in the streets, the writer of our verse wondered how it could ever be that men were still foolish and rejected the voice of wisdom.

But do you know, common as wisdom seemed in those days, it was nothing to the commonness of wisdom in our own days. To be sure, we do not hear wisdom crying in our streets, but wisdom is crying from every schoolhouse in the land—the school bell is wisdom's call to come and learn. The writer of our verse never saw a schoolhouse. There were none in his day. Now there is a schoolhouse for every boy and girl in the land, and generally the finest building you can find in a town is its schoolhouse. Every church-bell calling to church service and to Sunday-school is wisdom's voice. Every library and reading-room and book store and literary club is calling men to come and learn and be wise. Wisdom has set up millions of printing presses in the world in our day in order to carry her message to men. She is sending out hundreds of thousands of postmen to push her

words into our mail-boxes and under our doors. If a man be a fool to-day, it is because he was born a fool, or because he is determined to be a fool, and wisdom can do nothing with him.

The latter kind of a fool is a bigger fool than he ever was before, because he has so much better a chance of becoming wise, and because he is in a world with so many more wise people in it. The better the chance of being wise, the bigger the fool who will not use the chance. Don't be in that class, boys and girls. Learn, read, study, think, go to school all you can and as long as you can.

37

A HEDGE OF THORNS AND A HIGHWAY

YOU all go walking, don't you? When you go for a stroll, what kind of a path do you choose?

I once climbed a mountain down in Alabama. It was easy going the first part of the way, with ground clear and hard, and an easy slope. By-and-by it became harder. The slope grew steeper. But worse than that, the top of the mountain was covered with rocks, sharp and jagged. At first they were just scattered about and were not very

large. But they grew bigger the higher we went, and closer together, until at last they were fairly piled on top of one another. Over these rocks we had to clamber if we wanted to reach the summit of the mountain, and I very much did. There was no other way, so we went over them, but it was no fun, I can tell you that.

I might have found something else in my way. I might have found that my open and easy path ran into a lot of bushes, thorn bushes such as I have seen growing down there, with thorns an inch or two long, or with hooked thorns like those of the rose-bush. They would have caught my clothes, and torn my skin, and barred my way. I have been through just such tangled thickets, but not because I wanted to go that way. I had to in order to reach my journey's end. I never choose a thicket when I can get a clear path. Do you?

Do you know, the Bible has something to say about two men who went walking? One had a fine clear path to walk in, and the other went through thorn bushes. The strange thing was that each chose the path he walked in, only the man who got into the thorn bushes didn't know what trouble he was getting into. His path looked easy, and it went down-hill, and it was shady, and there were lots of places where one could lie down and take a nap. The other road went up-hill, and it was sunny and dusty, and there were no places for snoozing. But by-and-by the easy path reached

the foot of the hill, and then it ran into a marsh, and there there was nothing but thorn bushes. But the man who had chosen that path could not turn back now. So on he went, while the thorns tore his clothes, and scratched his skin, and pulled his temper to pieces. The other man who chose the open road kept on climbing, a little hot and a little dusty, but he reached his journey's end; and looking back over it all, he felt that he had had a beautiful journey.

Now, the Bible calls the first man "Sluggard," and it calls the other man "Upright." Do you know what a sluggard is? You all know what a slug is. It is a kind of worm that crawls very slowly or not at all, and takes life easy. A sluggard is a man who is a good deal like a slug. He, too, is trying to take life easy. Upright is a man who doesn't bother about the easy way. He is looking for the right way, and takes it even if it does go up-hill.

Would you like to know what the Bible says about these two men? Here it is:

"The way of the sluggard is as a hedge of thorns,
But the path of the upright is made a highway."

That is just what I said, isn't it? You will find it in the book of Proverbs, the fifteenth chapter and the nineteenth verse.

Have you ever seen Mr. Sluggard? I have,

many, many times. He is a fellow that is always looking for a soft snap. He never does to-day what he can put off till to-morrow, never does at all what by hook or crook he can get out of. He wants all days to be holidays, and just fun, not too hard fun. He starts out for one long holiday.

By-and-by something that he ought to have done and didn't do comes up and slaps him in the face. Something else that he forgot to do tears his clothes and digs into his skin. Something else he didn't do trips him up, and splash! he goes into a slimy frog-pond with no bottom, and when he gets through he is a sight to behold.

Mr. Upright keeps right on travelling, doing the right things at the right time and in the right way. He finds life means work, but work is fun when you go at it and do it, and it is fine to look back at. So Mr. Upright comes out fresh and smiling when his journey is done.

Which do you want to travel with, Mr. Sluggard or Mr. Upright? You are choosing now. It all depends on whether you are shirking and taking things easy, or are doing the right things at the right time and in the right way. Every task well done is a mile along the climbing way with Mr. Upright.

38

CAN WE HIDE?

DID you ever try to hide anything? I don't mean in fun, but in dead earnest—some secret about Christmas time, some good news, perhaps something wrong you had been doing. We all do wrong, and there is always a big temptation to tuck our bad deeds away out of sight where no one will ever know about it. How did you succeed? Didn't you find that the whole world was changed into a kind of detective agency for ferreting out the one thing you wanted hidden? All the world suddenly became very curious and very much given to prowling around and peeping, and you were in terror all the time lest your secret be found out.

Now, it isn't strange that it should be so. The fact is, everything in this world is connected with everything else. When we try to hide anything, we simply try to cut that thing off from everything else, and put it by itself. It cannot be done. It is as if things were all tied together with little strings, and when you pull one, that pulls all the rest, even the thing we want left out. The strings are too strong to cut. The more we try to cut one thing out, the more we bring it out to the light.

For we ourselves know. We can't forget the

secret. Because we want to hide it, we keep thinking about it. Did you ever learn to ride a bicycle? If you did, there was always a stone or a rut in the road that you wanted to dodge. So you gripped your handle-bars all the tighter, and were just determined you would not hit that thing, and the harder you tried, the more sure your wheel was to go right toward it. You were thinking about it so hard that your mind pulled your muscles toward it instead of away from it. The best way to avoid something is to forget it, and think about something else.

But a secret won't let you forget. I have heard of a murderer who had buried the body of the man he had killed out in the woods where no one would probably ever have found it. But he knew it was there. He was so afraid that someone would find that body that he was always going there to see. He acted so strangely that people began to suspect, and followed him, and found out his dreadful secret.

"Foul deeds will rise,
Tho' all conspire to hide them from men's eyes."

So says Shakespeare; and Jesus said:

"Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand? For there is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light" (Mark 4: 21, 22).

In all this big world there is no place where you can hide anything and be sure that it will never be found out. Your very face will give away your secret. And if you *could* hide from men, you could never hide from God.

So the only way to hide is to have nothing to hide—except in fun, of course. Live the frank, open life. If you ever do wrong, be honest and own up. It is the first and best thing you can do to make it right.

39

THE NARROW DOOR

IF we should go into an Oriental city or village we should find it looking very different from those in our own land. We build our houses each in the center of a lot, and if possible have a lawn and a garden around each. In Eastern lands they build their houses around their lots, and if possible have their lawns and gardens in the center surrounded by the houses. We put our windows on the outside of our houses so that we may look out on the street. They put their windows on the inside so that they may look into the garden or court, and so that the wall on the outside may be a sort

of fortress. Of course, there has to be a door out into the street so that the people in the house may go out and in, but this door is also a gate, opening on a passageway through the house into the court. If, as often happens, they want to have horses and donkeys and camels come into the court, the door must be large enough to let them come through.

But it would be inconvenient to have to swing a big, heavy door or gate every time anyone wanted to go in or out. So they generally, in case they have a broad door, have a narrow door inside it or in it, through which just men and women may pass. But they make it just as small as possible, so it will be easier to defend in case anyone wants to come in who has no business to enter. The broad door or gate is kept closed most of the time, and I have myself seen such doors in Europe walled up altogether.

Now suppose someone should want to enter the court of some house, and finding the broad door closed, should stand before it knocking and calling, when the narrow door was open and he could enter it if he only would?

Wouldn't you say that it served him right if the owner kept the broad door closed, and told him he might come in by the narrow door or not at all? The man who had a beautiful home would not want to have his broad door standing open all the time so that everyone who came along could make his home common property, though he might be

quite willing to let those in who would take the trouble to knock at the narrow door, so he could see who they were and find out that they meant no mischief.

The man with his broad door always open is the man who has nothing that anyone can injure, but who probably, by getting people inside, wants to cheat or abuse them for his own selfish ends.

A man once came to Jesus and said unto Him, "Lord, are they few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Did Jesus mean to say that there really are people who will try to get into the kingdom of God and be saved who will not be able? Does He mean to say that God tries to keep men out of His kingdom? All that Jesus has said in His Gospel would show that He does want people to come into the kingdom. God is merciful and loving, and a forgiving God.

But there are always men in this world who are trying to get pay without work, and get favours without being worthy of them. You can go into any big store or office in the city, and you will find there men who are very anxious to draw their salary when pay day comes around who are unwilling to do one stroke more of work than they have to to earn their salary, and are even ready to shirk all they can. There are men in politics who always

want office, and never do anything for the public good. There are men who want others to think well of them, but never try to deserve honour and love. In school there are boys and girls who want high marks on reviews and examinations, but will not study all the term to earn them. They may even be willing to cheat, to crib, to steal other folks' ideas, rather than do honest work for themselves.

So there are people who want to get into the kingdom of God, and enjoy all its blessedness and peace, all of its glory and rewards, but do not want to pay the price of real work. They are like men who stand outside the broad door and pound and call, and expect the owner to open it for them, but who will not take the trouble to go in through the narrow door. God did not make the way into His kingdom too hard for anyone to enter. He does not mean to discourage any honest man from entering. But there is no room in that kingdom for loafers and cheats, so God hasn't thrown open the broad door. The broad door of the devil's kingdom stands open, but that is because the devil wants to get everybody in to cheat and fleece them. What you get for nothing is not worth having at that price. But the narrow door God is ready to open to anyone who wants to enter His kingdom, and the narrow door is that of sorrow for our sins, and an honest desire to do right, and a willingness to let God help us.

40

A FORTRESS

IN wandering about the Old World you are constantly coming across old castles. Castles, you know, were fortresses. They had mighty walls, and high towers, and battlements, and bartizans over the gates—sort of bay-windows from the upper story from which, through loopholes, you could shoot down at anyone assailing the gate. Where possible, they had moats all around them filled with water, and drawbridges which might be lifted up and form part of the wall itself. Or, better even than moats, they were often planted on the top of rocks so high and steep that no one could climb them, and no one reach the castle unless he came along one narrow pathway and crossed the drawbridge into the castle itself.

I remember one that I found in the Vosges Mountains. It was built on a crag of rock jutting out of the side of a mountain, and its walls seemed a part of the rock, as if it had grown right out of the mountain. As I looked up at it through the woods which covered the mountainside, I wondered how one could ever get into it. But as I climbed along the path through the woods and up the side of the crag, I found myself led around to the other side of the castle where was a narrow

ridge of rock leading up to the castle gate, with only the moat between, but with a bartizan just above.

In the olden days, six hundred years ago, when the castle of Girsberg was first built, how easy it must have been to keep an army out! There were no cannon then heavy enough to pound those walls to pieces. No one could climb up that vertical crag, or leap the moat. In that castle a very small company could have defended themselves against an army. Of course, it would be useless now, for a single shell loaded with modern explosives would knock Girsberg to pieces. But I am speaking of olden times.

"Thou art my rock and my fortress." The writer of the thirty-first Psalm is speaking of God. He is a rock and a fortress to all who trust in Him—a rock because a rock itself might be a fortress, and the only use in those days to which a rock could be put was to put a fortress on it. But isn't it strange to call God a rock and a fortress? God is a spirit. We cannot see Him nor feel Him. He is not walls, or crags, or battlements. Men laugh at the idea of God being a fortress, and they say God is always on the side of the heaviest battalions.

But men have sometimes found out that they were wrong. Sennacherib was a mighty king with a great army. He marched his army against Jerusalem, perched though it was on a hill, and he de-

fied Jehovah, whose temple stood on Mount Zion. What could Jehovah do to him? But the king of Egypt came out against him, and he had to leave Jerusalem and go down the road toward Egypt. But he did not even fight with the king of Egypt, for there in the lowlands God sent the pestilence against his army, and it melted away, and Sennacherib had to return to his own land, and he never took Jerusalem.

Napoleon started with a mighty army against Moscow. Nothing could stand before him. He fought battles and won victories and marched on till Moscow was his. Then God sent forth His armies, not soldiers, not even of angels, but just of snowflakes; armed not with guns, but with winter's cold, and one by one Napoleon's army lay down and died, and scarce a man returned.

God has the mightiest forces after all, winds and tempests, summer's heat and winter's cold, pestilence and famine. He holds, too, the hearts of men. Many a man has started out to do some wicked deed, but just at the critical moment he could not. Something held him back, as it were a hand laid upon him. He felt a strange fear. God had laid hold upon him. God's Spirit had spoken to him.

God has promised to make all things work together for good to those who love Him. He will use all of these forces for the protection of His children. He will not always do it in our way.

God has His own ways. He will not always keep trouble from us. It isn't best that He should. But He can make even the trouble itself to work for our good.

A fortress and a rock stay in one place, but God is ever with us. You remember Elisha's servant went out of the city one morning and found the Syrians camped roundabout the city to capture Elisha, an army against a man, and he was mightily troubled, and went to his master. And Elisha just prayed, "Open his eyes that he may see." And God opened his eyes, and he saw the mountain full of chariots and horsemen roundabout Elisha, God's army about His prophet. They were always there, even if the servant did not see them.

Learn to trust God. There is only one time when we need to be afraid, and that is when we are doing wrong. Then God is against us. When we are doing right, God is always our rock and our fortress.

41

A CITY SET ON A HILL

YOU have all ridden on the railroad. Have you ever noticed where the railroad was going? A railroad is a lazy sort of a thing. It always picks for itself as easy a path as possible. It

never climbs hills unless it has to. Inasmuch as the rivers and creeks have worn their way through the hills, and made level paths for themselves, the railroad sticks pretty close to the rivers and the streams. Wherever there is a railroad track, there is a stream not far away. A railroad leaves one stream only to climb over a watershed and find another stream on the other side.

There is something else that you will find along a railroad, at least in this western country of ours, and that is that the towns and villages are all along the line of the railroad. There is a reason for it. It means that in these days the most important thing about a town is means of transportation, so where the railroads are, or in earlier times where the rivers or harbours were, there the towns must go. And that shows, too, what is true of our western country, that the railroads went first, and the towns grew up. Because the railroads are in the valleys, the towns are in the valleys.

But if you should go to New England you would not always find it that way. Often down there the railroads lie along the river valley and the towns are back on the hills. That shows as plainly as can be that the towns were there before the railroads came along, and that they were put there for some other reason than convenience of transportation. The railroad came and would not climb the hill to the town, so the townsfolk have to come down the hill to the railroad.

Perhaps I can explain that best by taking you to Italy. I noticed there, especially one day as I travelled from Rome to Naples through a very hilly country, that often the towns were not on the railroad at all, but stood on the tops of some of the highest, steepest hills, with great battlemented walls, picturesque enough, but hard to get into and hard to get out of, unless you fell out. Why did they ever build towns in such outlandish places?

They were built centuries ago when the first thing to be sought was not transportation but protection. The country was full of robbers, there was war most of the time, and armies were always marching across the country. A city was safe only behind monstrous walls, and the higher the hill on which the walls were built, the harder it was to get at them to batter them down. So in spite of the inconvenience of getting in and out, the people built their cities on the hilltops. The result is that far over the country you can see them, huge castles as it were, with spires and high-pitched roofs rising above them.

Perhaps this will help you to understand Jesus' words when He said, "A city set on a hill cannot be hid." Nothing set on a hill can ever be hid—a castle, a tower, a flagstaff, even a hut, or what-not.

Jesus was speaking, when He said that, to His disciples, and He said that they were just like cities set on a hill. They could not be hid. The world

is always looking at the Christian man. It cannot be helped. The world is looking at him to see how he behaves himself. When the Christian man goes wrong, and does what Jesus would not want him to do, the world says, "There's a pretty Christian for you!"

Now perhaps some of you will say, "Then I don't want to be a Christian, for I do not want to be a city set on a hill that cannot be hid." Then you will miss one of the greatest opportunities to do the world good that can ever come to you. For if the Christian who doesn't do right does a lot of harm, the Christian who does do right does manifold more good, for men look at him and say, "Now if I could be as good a Christian as So and So, it would be worth while." And by-and-by some people become Christians and start to do themselves as Jesus would have them, just because they have seen a Christian like a city set on a hill who did just right.

42

THE CORK TAPS AND THE STEEL

IN a gun factory there was once hung a bar of steel. It was a heavy bar, weighing five hundred pounds, and it hung straight down by a very

delicate chain. You would not have wanted to have undertaken the job of swinging that bar, so heavy and immovable did it seem. Close beside the bar there was hung a common bottle cork on a silk thread. You would have wondered if you had seen it what that cork was there for, and least of all would you have suspected that that tiny cork could move that bar of steel.

But by-and-by the cork was set gently in motion, swinging back and forth, and striking the steel. At first it did not seem to have any effect. But the cork was kept swinging and gently striking the bar. At the end of ten minutes there was a tremor in the bar. It was beginning to feel the effect of those gentle taps. In ten minutes more there was a distinct vibration or shaking of the whole mass of steel. In ten minutes more the bar was swinging like a pendulum and keeping time to the impact of that cork. What you would hardly have wanted to do with a push of your hands, the cork had done by a succession of tiny taps.

That is the way, boys and girls, that the worst sins come into our lives. We do not give way to a new temptation all at once. We are too strong for that. But there comes a little temptation, a very little one, and it strikes upon our lives. It is so little that we hardly notice it, and we should laugh at the idea that such a temptation could disturb our lives. By-and-by it comes again, and it keeps on coming. We grow used to it. We think about it.

It doesn't seem as bad as it did at first. It does look as if it would be a very pleasant thing to do. Before we know it we are wishing we could do it. Perhaps before we know it we have done it. The tiny temptation has swayed our lives to evil. Only God can keep us true.

Not only is that the way in which evil comes into our lives, but that is the way in which God's kingdom is coming in the earth. Sometimes mighty blows are struck for it, and they do good, but they do not do as much good as we often think, partly because they are so few and so far between. For the rest of the time there are only cork taps of lives given to the service of God. It may be just a child's life, a child's word, or a child's prayer.

I once heard of a little girl who was being taken through Auburn prison with her parents. They came to some place where she could not go alone, she must be carried. The guide who was leading the party turned to one of the convicts and bade him carry the child. He did not move. It so happened that the guide had turned to the most stubborn, hardened man in that prison. No one could do anything with him. But the little girl knew nothing about it, and in all confidence went to him and stretched out her arms to be lifted. The man broke into tears, lifted her and carried her all through the prison. From that day he was a changed man. The cork tap of a child's trust had changed the hardened man's whole life.

Just a cork tap, but there are hundreds and thousands of them falling every day, and Satan's kingdom is trembling, and some day it will fall.

Just cork taps! Are you giving any of them?

43

THE WATCHMAN

ONE of my fields was in a city by one of the great lakes. There was a harbour where the boats came in, a harbour formed by a river. There were piers running out on either side of the entrance. On one of them there was a tower—two towers, in fact. One of them was at the end of the pier and was the lighthouse tower. The other was just at the beginning of the pier, a square tower with a room with open windows at the top. There was someone up there watching all day long through the summer season. He was kept there because there were bathing beaches north and south of the harbour entrance, and crowds of people on them on every pleasant day, and boats in the river and sometimes on the lake. Frequently people got into trouble, going out beyond their depth, caught by the undertow, taken with cramps, or something. The watchman in the tower was there to give the alarm and call out the

life-saving crew, which was housed just a little further back. Often he warned people of their danger and called them back before it was too late.

Lonesome and tedious business up there, hour after hour, day and night, watching the stretch of sand and water. But suppose sometime he should grow weary and cease to watch, or even fall asleep; and suppose that just at that moment some bather should get into trouble, or some boat capsize, and there should be no one to see, to call out the crew and rescue the one in danger, and he should perish in the water, as quite a number did while I was there. Would you not say the careless watchman was guilty of that man's death? He did not go out there and drown him, but he could have saved him, and he did not. Perhaps the man could have saved himself. Perhaps he went where he knew he ought not to have gone. Then he was guilty of his own death, and the watchman was guilty, too, for he did not do his duty. Suppose the watchman did see and warned the man, and yet he went into danger and was drowned. Then the watchman was not to blame. The guilt rests on the man himself, and the watchman is free.

In every ancient city there was always a watchman on the walls looking for the approach of a possible enemy—and there were many more enemies then than now. In times of danger the safety of the whole city might depend on its watchman. Every army has its sentinels to watch and give

warning of the approach of the enemy. Again and again the safety of the whole army depends on the care and skill of the men on picket duty.

To the prophet Ezekiel God once spoke, saying: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel" (3:17). Only the enemy the prophet was to watch for was the people's own evil ways, and he was to warn them of the dangers of sin. If a righteous man was tempted and fell into sin, the prophet was to warn him of his danger. If he failed in his duty, God would require the sinner's blood at the hand of the prophet. If he warned and the man did not heed, then the man would suffer for his sins, but the prophet was free. What an awful thing to have the lives of others depending upon ourselves!

But, really, we are all watchmen for each other and for all about us. Cain angrily asked God after he had murdered his brother Abel, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Yes, he was his brother's keeper, and so are you and I our brothers' keepers. We are here to help each other to do the right, and to keep people from doing the wrong. We are watchmen in God's towers—watchmen, for instance, to warn the heathen of his dangerous place and bring him to God. We need to watch our every word and deed and see that we lead no one astray, or let him go to ruin.

44

THE SHADOW OF A ROCK

I REMEMBER reading some years ago the story of a sand storm in the desert. In the desert grow no trees, there are no streams of water, nothing but miles and miles of sand, and sometimes rock, with here and there a few shrubs. Over this desolate region the wind blows with nothing to break its force. The sand is so dry and loose that when the wind blows strong the sand is carried before it like the drifting snow of our northern climes. The air is filled with sand that cuts the face as with tiny knives. One can scarcely breathe on account of it. The sun looks red, and casts a sickly light over everything. The wind is very, very hot, so hot that one can scarcely endure it.

But, worst of all, the sand drifts around anything that stands upright as the snow does in winter in our country, and forms great piles which would soon cover everything that was left there. The Arabs, who live in tents in the desert and wander from place to place, as soon as the wind begins to blow the sand, break camp, pack everything on the backs of camels or horses, wrap scarfs around their heads, covering everything but their eyes, and start off across the desert toward the nearest high

land of which they know. Sometimes they must travel whole days before finding shelter, but they must go on or they would be completely buried by the sand drifts. When they come to a great rock or hill, they are safe, for they can get into the shadow of it, and the sand cannot reach them. The rock will break the wind and make it drop its sand. There they can stay till the sand storm is over.

As I read the story, I thought of a verse of the Bible:

"And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the *shadow of a great rock* in a weary land."

Don't you believe that the Prophet Isaiah, who wrote those words, had seen a sand storm in the desert, and knew what a comfort it was to be behind a great rock when the wind was driving the sand in great drifts over all the country? A desert is certainly "a weary land" in a time like that.

"A man shall be . . . as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." A man shall be so true, so firm, so good, that not all the storm of temptation and sin shall blow him away or cover him up. He shall stand so high, and so strong, that in his shadow other men can stand and be safe. Some men are themselves like drifting sands. The first puff of wind carries them before it. Other men are like great rocks. Nothing can

move them and they break all winds that blow against them.

"A man"—not some one man. Any man can be that kind of a rock. Every boy here this morning can grow up so strong and true that he shall be "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Every girl can be so pure and good that she can be "an hiding place from the wind." You can each one of you begin now to be rocks by standing up firmly against every wrong and for every right.

There was just one man who always stood firm, never was blown with the tempests at all. That man was Jesus. When we find the temptations of the world blowing like desert sand storms, we can go to Jesus and stand in His shelter, and find Him "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

45

ABOUT FOUNDATIONS

AS we go about the city this spring we see a lot of foundations being laid for houses which are to be built. It looks a very simple thing to lay a foundation, but I helped lay one myself last summer, and I learned that it isn't as easy as it looks.

First, you must get it deep enough. If you don't, the frost may get under it and heave it up and let it down, or your cellar may be low. And it is very easy for tape measures to shrink and stretch, and for cellars to seem deeper than they really are, as I learned to my cost.

Then it isn't so easy to get foundations just straight as it looks. The footing for mine was put in crooked and had to be made over, or my house would have stood on the bias on the lot.

Harder than either is to get your wall on the dead level, for bricks and blocks are not absolutely square, and your mortar can't be spread absolutely even, and before you know it your wall humps up at one place and sinks down at another, and when you put on your box sill, you have to bolster it up or it will bend and rock, and your house will be very insecure.

Once when I was a newspaper reporter out in the city of Denver there came a hurry-up call. The walls of the finest office building in the city were cracking and falling, throwing bricks about the rooms. I rushed over there, but found the trouble was only with a chimney. It had been built on loose sand, and its walls had settled and then broken. I do not believe that we have trouble of that kind around here, but in many places there are quicksands and sink-holes, and it is almost impossible to get a secure foundation.

And then there is always trouble to get a strong

wall, good bricks or blocks, mortar that is hard and solid. Often you see foundations cracking in the middle or crumbling at the corners.

Everything must rest on a foundation. You cannot build in the air. Men rest on foundations. I do not mean simply that we have to stand on something, that we cannot stand in the air. We rest on foundations in our thoughts and desires. What are some of them?

There is the foundation, *What Folks Say.* There are men and women, boys and girls, who care only for what others will say about them. That is a foundation of sand. For people do not all talk the same way, and the same people do not always say the same thing. They change. There are folks who are very stupid and very wrong, and we are all stupid and wrong sometimes. People who build on the foundation, *They Say,* are shams. They will tumble sometime. Men will find them to be timid and will despise them for it.

There is the foundation, *Everybody Does It.* As a matter of fact, not everybody does. But if they do, that does not make it right. For, as a matter of fact, on everything that you can name, everybody in the world once was wrong. By-and-by there was just one man who was right, and everybody else was wrong. Then there were two right, and so it kept on until perhaps there came a time when everybody was right, or at least the most folks. But it took one man to get things

started, and he was worth more than all the rest who were wrong. *Everybody Does It* is a leaky foundation.

Another foundation is, *It Always Has Been So.* Old ways and old ideas are about as likely to be wrong as right. The world began very low down, and it is growing better all the time, but it is a long way from being all right yet. *It Always Has Been So* may make a very crooked foundation. It would be like the one my man tried to put in. He took the front line of my lot, guessed a right angle, and then built from his crooked lines.

Jesus had something to say about foundations. He told about the man "who built upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell"—bad foundation. And He told about another man "who built upon the rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not"—a good foundation. He tells us what a good foundation is. It is His own teaching, for that is the bed rock of eternal right. If we try to do what Jesus would have us do, we have built our lives on the best foundation in the world.

46

THE WALL AND THE PLUMB-LINE

DID you ever see masons laying a wall? If you did, I presume you saw a line fastened and hanging beside the wall, with a heavy ball on the end of it. What was it there for? You all know. Walls need to stand straight. A leaning wall is in constant danger of falling. Some walls lean, to be sure, and do not fall, but it isn't a safe thing to do. You probably have all seen pictures of the leaning tower of Pisa. I have seen the tower itself, and there is another very much like it in Sicily. They have stood there for centuries, and for aught I know may stand till the judgment. But most leaning walls take a tumble sooner or later, and masons in building always try to get their towers straight.

It is easy, however, to make a tiny mistake down near the bottom, and then all the wall goes wrong. One brick may be a little thicker on one side than the other, or the layer of mortar may not be exactly even, may have a stone in it or something of that kind. It is not easy to see such little things just at the start. So the wall goes on wrong, or, as we say, "out of plumb."

Now to prevent all that the mason must have his

plumb-line, for that shows him at once that something is wrong. A plumb-line is named from the ball that hangs at the bottom. It must be heavy, so it is made of lead, the heaviest metal we know. The old Romans called it *plumbum*, and we keep the word in plumb-line, and plumber. That ball will always hang straight down, and that will make the line to which it is attached a straight line, and by comparing his wall with that line, the mason can tell whether it is "plumb" or not.

Once an old prophet of Israel had a vision. He saw God standing by a wall, and God was holding a plumb-line in His hand. He asked the prophet what he saw, and Amos, the prophet, answered, "I see a plumb-line." Then God said to him, "Behold, I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel. I will not again pass by them any more."

What did God mean by saying that? I think He meant that not only do walls get out of plumb, but people, too. Men and women lean away from the straight line, lean in their hearts away from what is good and true. It is bad business for a wall to lean, but it is worse for a man to lean. Walls are useful, but they do not stand forever; men and women do. Walls are good for some uses, but men and women are good in themselves. A wall never knows when it is out of plumb, never feels it, but men and women do. They suffer for it, and there is no way of helping it.

God's people were out of plumb. They were such a leaning wall that God did not intend to bother with them any more. He had measured them with a plumb-line, and the only thing to do was to leave them and let them topple over to their own ruin. God does not always do that. He wants men to be straight. When they lean He tries to straighten them up. You can't straighten a leaning wall. The only thing to do is to tear it down and build it again. You can straighten men. God can straighten the worst leaning man in the world if the man will only let Him.

We are all out of plumb. The best of us is a leaning wall. Where is the plumb-line to measure ourselves by? God has set a plumb-line in the midst of humanity, a man like ourselves, but a man who stood true, Jesus Christ. The best thing about Him is that He is more than a plumb-line. A plumb-line just hangs there, and shows how badly a wall is out of plumb. Jesus Christ, we might say, is a plumb-line that pushes against leaning walls and straightens them up. That is a plumb-line that is worth having, isn't it? Isn't it one we want to get up against, and let Him straighten our lives?

47

ON PUTTING UP FRAMES

I HAVE been helping to build a house, and it is all a new experience to me, and I am learning something every day.

I have been interested in seeing how a house becomes strong. I have watched the putting together of the various wall frames. A lot of sticks of timber are nailed together as tightly as they can be, and then we all get hold of it and lift the thing into its place. But for all our nailing, it is a very weak and wobbly affair. It will not stand alone, it has to be braced. Even then it is hard to keep it from tipping somehow. The wind sways it, and a falling hammer jars it out of place. You wonder how a house can ever stand made out of wobbly walls like that.

By-and-by you put another wall next to it running the other way, just as wobbly as itself, only the two keep each other from wobbling at one spot. Then you put up another one at the other end, and there is still less wobbling. Then you put in some partition frames in the middle. Next you nail boards across the outside, and you put heavy timbers across the top, reaching over to the wall on the other side, and spike them down. And every

time you put in another timber and drive another spike, you take some of the wobble out of your wall frame, till by-and-by you can take away your braces, and your wall stands firm even against the winds that blow across these North Dakota prairies,—unless, of course, a cyclone comes that way, and nothing man can build will stand against it.

I have thought how much those wobbly walls are like men and women and boys and girls. We cannot stand alone. We cannot care for ourselves. Suppose you were turned out for just one day on the prairie with no one to help you, no one to tell you anything, nothing that anybody else had ever done to help you, how would you fare? You would have nothing to eat but the wild berries and fruits you could pick for yourselves, or the game you could kill, no clothes but what you could make out of leaves or grass or skins, no shelter but what you could build out of fallen branches or living trees you could pull down. After twenty-four hours the wisest and the strongest of us would be very hungry, and very cold, and very miserable.

So in our higher life. There is so little we can find out for ourselves, so much we learn from others. There is so little good in ourselves. So much of the goodness there is in us comes from the customs and laws and counsel of others. We are just wobbly walls, and we grow strong only as we get up against each other. And the more folks we get up against, the stronger we grow. That is

the reason for families and cities, for schools and churches, for all our clubs and societies. They are all wobbly men standing up against each other, and making each other strong. That is the reason for Christ ever having come to this earth. He was a firmer wall against which we could all lean. Paul describes it all when he says of Jesus Christ:

"From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love" (Eph. 4: 16).

Men sometimes try to stand alone. They hate to depend on others. They try to be walls standing for themselves. They cannot do it. Men were not made to stand alone. It is our main business in life to learn how to stand together and make each other strong.

48

FIVE MINUTES WITH YEAST

YOU have all watched the process of bread-making. You have seen the flour and water stirred, and then the yeast added and stirred in, and the whole left to rise. Nowadays yeast comes

in yeast cakes. I remember, however, going with my grandfather to the brewery that was in my native town to get yeast long before such a thing as a yeast cake was known. Yeast was used in making beer, and the brewery always had a supply. But the yeast cake has come in, and the brewery has gone out, and that particular brewery has been turned into a Methodist church—which is far better.

But now about yeast—What is it? I never used to know except that it was something which in a strange and unaccountable way made bread light, and did not itself smell very good. But let us imagine we are looking at a bit of yeast under a microscope. What we should see would be a vast number of little balls. They are so small that it would take three thousand, three hundred and thirty-three of them laid side by side to make an inch. They are called cells, and they are alive. They are really little plants.

Now let us imagine that these little balls are just hot enough, and have moisture enough, and food enough around them. By-and-by something strange would happen. Perhaps you would see a little bunch growing out on the side of each ball. Soon it would be as big as the ball itself. Then it would break off and go into business for itself, and there would be two yeast cells where there was one before.

Or perhaps you would see something stranger

yet. You might see little walls crossing each cell, dividing it up into four separate cells, which finally break apart, and there are four yeast cells where there was one before. These are the two ways in which yeast plants grow.

Now when Mother puts yeast into her moistened flour and sets it in a warm place, she is really putting billions of tiny yeast cells into the very place where they love to be, and where they can grow best. They go to work mighty fast, feeding on the flour and growing, then dividing and making more cells, feeding again and dividing again, till all the moistened flour is filled with them. The reason they make the bread light is that in feeding on the flour they don't use all of it, but what they do not use is sent off in a gas which has to have more room than the flour had. So the gas pushes out on all sides, and makes little holes in the mass. Bread with enough holes in it is light bread. Baking kills the cells and drives off the gas, but the holes remain.

"Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened."

Jesus is speaking. In our Bible stands the old English word leaven, but it meant yeast. Jesus is talking about yeast, and He is saying that the kingdom of heaven is just like yeast.

What He means is that you get the kingdom of

God into a man's heart, and it begins to grow just like yeast. Whether the man means it or not, he begins to make over all those that are around him, and to put the kingdom of God in their hearts, too. One real Christian means by-and-by two, three, four Christians. So Christianity has grown in the world. When Jesus left this world the Christians could all be put in one room. Now they are counted by the tens and hundreds of millions. They never were growing so fast in number as they are now.

Jesus meant something more. He meant that if the kingdom of God really and truly gets into one corner of a man's heart, it goes to growing there, until by-and-by it has all his heart. For the love of God, a boy or a girl starts out to be good in one way, or to do one good thing. Pretty soon he finds that there is something else in his life that doesn't fit in with that one thing. It makes him uncomfortable until he has thrown out that other evil thing, too, just as the yeast goes on till all the dough is yeast.

How is God's kingdom growing in your heart and mine?

49

HOW THINGS GROW

WHAT an astonishing thing it is, when you come to think of it, that things grow! In the spring-time we put seeds into the ground. Most of them are tiny things. If you did not know, you could not imagine that they would amount to much, they are so tiny. Some seeds are larger than others. Beans are quite sizeable things, but the plants that grow from them are not so large. Tomato seeds are much smaller, but a tomato plant will grow larger than a bean plant. A maple may grow as large as an oak, though its seed isn't a tenth of an acorn. An elm may grow larger than either, though its seed is not more than a tenth of the maple seed. A strawberry seed produces only a plant that runs along the ground, but a blackberry seed will produce a bush as high as your head.

How fast things grow! I knew a man down in Michigan who measured some cornstalks during a hot week in July, and found that they grew three feet in that week. The kernels of corn planted last June are in many places now over a man's head. Four weeks ago when I went away I left my garden free of weeds. Last night I pulled up

some that were going to seed. Their seeds were there, but they were so small I could not have seen them if I had looked.

How do things grow? Every living thing starts from a single cell, so small you would have to take a microscope to see it. By-and-by it divides, and then there are two cells. Each of them divides, and there are four. So it goes on, sometimes very, very fast. Your seed already probably has more than one cell when you plant it, but not many. Most of the seed is made up of food for these cells to use as they divide and make new seeds. As they divide, some cells form a tiny rootlet pushing down into the ground. The cells find down there other materials out of which to make cells. They take it, leave the rest they cannot use, and send the food in the sap to other cells. Another group of cells pushes up, always dividing, in the form of a stem. When it reaches the surface of the ground the cells have already divided till they form one or two tiny leaves, folded up but all ready to open. They drink in the air, find gases in it that they can use, break them up, put what they can use into the sap to feed the leaves and stems and roots, and turn out the rest. So the cells take in new material till they can divide and make new cells, always adding particles so fine you cannot see them. The plant cells are at work all the time, day and night, just as long as they are growing.

And Jesus says that that is just the way good

things come into the world. They are like seeds, mustard seeds, which are very tiny. Nobody would ever have suspected that so much good could come out of so small a start. The best thing in the world, God's kingdom, started with just one man, Jesus Himself. He called Andrew and John. Then there were three. Andrew called his brother Peter, and John called his brother James, and Jesus called Philip. Then there were six. By-and-by there were twelve. When Jesus died on the cross there were three hundred. They could all have been gotten into one room in Jerusalem, and not another Christian in the world. You would have had to hunt for them even in Jerusalem. But they kept on adding, each one one, until there were Christians everywhere in the great Roman Empire.

Still there was a vast world beyond, full of people, of whose very existence they knew nothing. But they began working on the people they knew just outside of the bounds of the Roman Empire. They were made Christians. Soon there were whole nations that were Christians at least in name. Our forefathers were among them. So it has gone on, finding new peoples, spreading the seed of the kingdom. I remember the time when there wasn't a Christian in Korea. Now there are 150,000 or more of them, and mighty lively Christians, too.

So the kingdom of God is going to keep on growing till it fills the earth. And the biggest

work anyone can do in this world is to help it grow.

50

GETTING STARTED RIGHT

I HAVE had a garden this past summer, the first time I have had a garden that amounted to anything for some years. I was a little late with it, and when I was ready for tomato plants, I went to the near-by greenhouse and got nine of their best plants, and paid ten cents apiece for them. But they were potted plants, and all I had to do was to take them out of the pots, soil and all, and put them in the ground. My garden was where I could put on no water, but rain began to fall before they were really in the ground, and it was a heavy downpour. So my plants grew luxuriantly, and were covered with tomatoes which ripened early and have kept on ripening. You see they got started right.

But some of the rest of the family thought I did not know how to handle tomato plants, so they got a dozen for forty cents. They were put in one hot day and not watered. They wilted, and the leaves grew yellow, and it looked as if they were not going to make a live of it at all. But they finally did, and in spite of all the stories about the big

tomatoes we were going to have, we only had a few, most of them not much bigger than hickory nuts, and some rotten. The stems were twisted, and they did not amount to much. The trouble was they didn't get started right.

Now, boys and girls are a good deal like tomato plants. They need a good start.

They need good food to grow right, just as the plants need to be in good soil and to have good roots to take up food from the soil. I was reading a pitiful story the other day of a visit to Vienna. Before the war it was one of the proudest and richest cities in Europe, and perhaps, next to Brussels, the handsomest. People were strong, and happy, and well there. Now you can find hundreds of children in Vienna whose bones are soft so they cannot walk, whose limbs are twisted and tied almost into bow-knots, and who never smile, because they have never had the proper food. You may feed them now as you will, but they will never be healthy and strong. They did not get the right start.

Our minds need food. We grow by thinking about the right things, and loving right things, and doing right things. School is to you a table prepared with all good things for your minds. I wonder whether last year you made full use of them. If you didn't, then you lost something that will never come back to you. By so much you failed to get a right start. The best you can do is

to start in on this new year right, and make the most of it. In the end it all depends on yourselves. Plants grow where they are put, and they have no choice about it. They are given their start. You make your own start.

You, like plants, need to grow straight from the very start. Crooks never come out. There are winds of passion that whip you over, and bad habits that put crooks into your lives, the habit of using bad language, the habit of dilly-dallying, the habit of misrepresenting, the habit of pampering your tastes, especially for sweets.

I always have to watch my plants for cutworms. Cutworms, you know, are lazy worms which never crawl up a stalk to eat off limbs and leaves, or burrow down to eat off roots, but just eat off stems at the ground. My father used to get the start of them by putting tin rings around every plant he set out. Mr. Cutworm is too lazy to climb over or dig under, and the plant inside its ring is safe. There are some sins which eat into your lives and destroy them just as cutworms do the young plants. Home and school, and church and Sunday-school are protecting rings around you. But some boys and girls try to get outside of these protections as soon as possible. You can defy home and parents, teachers and friends, if you will, but you do it at your own peril.

So try to get a good start, so as to grow strong and straight and clean and useful men and women.

51

THE FOUNTAIN FROM THE TEARS

IN the ancient city of Corinth, where Paul once preached and where he founded a church, there was a fountain. It gushed out of the side of the hill in the center of the city on which there was built their great fort, and which was called Acrocorinthus. The waters ran down the hillside till they fell into a marble basin at its foot. Everybody agreed that they were the sweetest and the coldest and the most sparkling waters in all that region. To that marble basin gathered almost the whole city for water. Women came with their water jars, children to quench their thirst, and in the shadow of the walls that surrounded, old men of the city gathered and gossiped and listened to the plashing of the waters all day long.

It is a strange fact that when the great city of Corinth fell into ruins, and all its people went to live elsewhere, even the fountain was lost. Its waters, if they continued to run, ran elsewhere, and its marble basin was choked with rubbish and lost to sight. A few years ago some men who were digging into the soil to find out what they could about old Corinth came upon this very fountain. They uncovered it, so that if we went to Corinth to-day we could see the very spot to which

centuries ago all Corinth came for water, and where the old men sat gossiping in the shade.

There is an interesting story about that old fountain. It was called the Fountain of Pirene, and it was named for the daughter of a king. She was a mother, and she had one boy whom she dearly loved. His name was Cenchrias. She loved him just as most mothers love their boys. One day word was brought to her that he was dead, that he had been killed when he was out hunting by the arrows of the beautiful huntress Diana. Poor Pirene's heart was broken. The story goes that she melted away into tears that flowed down the hill, and continued to flow, and became the Fountain of Pirene.

Just one of the old stories such as the Greeks loved to tell, but I think it is a story with a meaning. The tears of Pirene became a fountain of sparkling and sweet water which refreshed a whole city. I think the Greeks when they told the story must have meant that sometimes the sweetest blessings of life come through tears, through sorrow. We do not ordinarily think of any good as coming out of tears, but it often does. It always may. Indeed, I don't know that anything good ever came in any other way.

The liberty we enjoy has cost thousands upon thousands of lives. Mothers have wept over sons that have fallen, and wives have mourned the loss of husbands, and children have grieved for fathers

they would never see again, that we might be free. Most of the inventions that we use and enjoy have cost someone toil and disappointment and sorrow almost without end. The very Christian hope and light which we enjoy this morning comes out of the sufferings and death of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Fountains of Pirene, sweet waters out of tears!

We can even come closer home than that. We learn to know love, the love of parents and friends, and the love of God, and we learn to trust them all because of the sorrow that comes to us and comes to them.

So when sorrow comes to us—and it comes to all of us sooner or later—and our tears are falling, as fall they must, we may all stop and think of Pirene, and if we look and wait, we shall find some way of turning our tears into sweet waters. We need not think them all bitter.

52

THE SHOEMAKER WHO BECAME A MISSIONARY

THERE once lived in Northamptonshire, in England, not very far from London, a shoemaker. He was fifteen years old when our Decla-

ration of Independence was signed. I presume he had already begun to use the awl and drive pegs. Just a shoemaker—and somehow the world has never expected great things of shoemakers. But this young man was not an ordinary shoemaker. He loved birds and insects and plants. There was one book he especially loved. It was the story of Captain Cook's voyage around the world. It made him put a map of the world up on the wall of the shop, and day after day as he cobbled away, between pegs he looked up at that map, and wondered about the people who lived in those lands beyond the sea which Captain Cook had visited for the first time.

Not simply did he wonder about them. He grew tremendously interested in them. Captain Cook and his men had found the people of those far-away lands to be heathen,—savages, many of them, cannibals, some of them. This shoemaker thought about Jesus' command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. Why had it not been done? Nobody seemed to care about them except this cobbler in England. But when he was eighteen years old, he began to pray God to bring about the conversion of the heathen. Then he began to feel that he ought to do something to answer his own prayer.

He knew he had to study before he could do anything. So he bought a Latin grammar and began to teach himself Latin. That was about the

first thing people began to study in those days when they wanted to become scholars. When he had mastered Latin, he went on and learned Greek, Hebrew, French and Dutch. He became a minister, and settled as pastor over a little church. But the people were too poor to pay him enough to live on. He taught school and cobbled shoes for a living.

Always, to his own people, to his brother ministers, he talked about sending the Gospel to the heathen. He wrote a book on that subject. He preached sermons. He plead with tears in his eyes. But nobody would hear him. They laughed at him, and thought his plan absurd.

At last he succeeded in persuading a few friends that it could be done and ought to be done. In 1792, just three hundred years after Columbus discovered America, at the village of Ketering, in England, a missionary society was formed, the first Baptist Foreign Missionary Society; $65.50 was raised, and with that little sum, the work of carrying the Gospel to the heathen was begun in dead earnest. And the praying shoemaker, William Carey, was sent out as the first missionary.

He went next year to India, and settled near Calcutta. India was then ruled by Englishmen, but they had no use for missionaries, although in the charter of the East India Company one of the aims set down was that it should carry the Gospel to India. But the men of that company had been

so busy making money that they had forgotten all about that. Far from wanting Carey in India, the servants of that company did all in their power to drive him out.

But William Carey would not be beaten. He had to toil for his own support, and he suffered terrible hardships. But all the while he was mastering the languages of India, Bengali, Sanskrit, the ancient language of India, and a dozen or more languages besides. He translated the Bible into several of them. He became one of the greatest language scholars that ever lived, a professor of languages in a college at Calcutta.

But Carey did more than become a missionary himself. His example inspired others, until hundreds had followed in his steps, and the great foreign missionary work was begun. Men call him "The Father of Modern Missions." That isn't quite true, but he did start a wonderful movement. You boys and girls are going to live to see that cause change the whole world.

Perhaps some of you can do as Carey did, and go to carry the glorious light of Christ's Gospel to those that have it not.

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